





gall. rev. 478 k

(1)

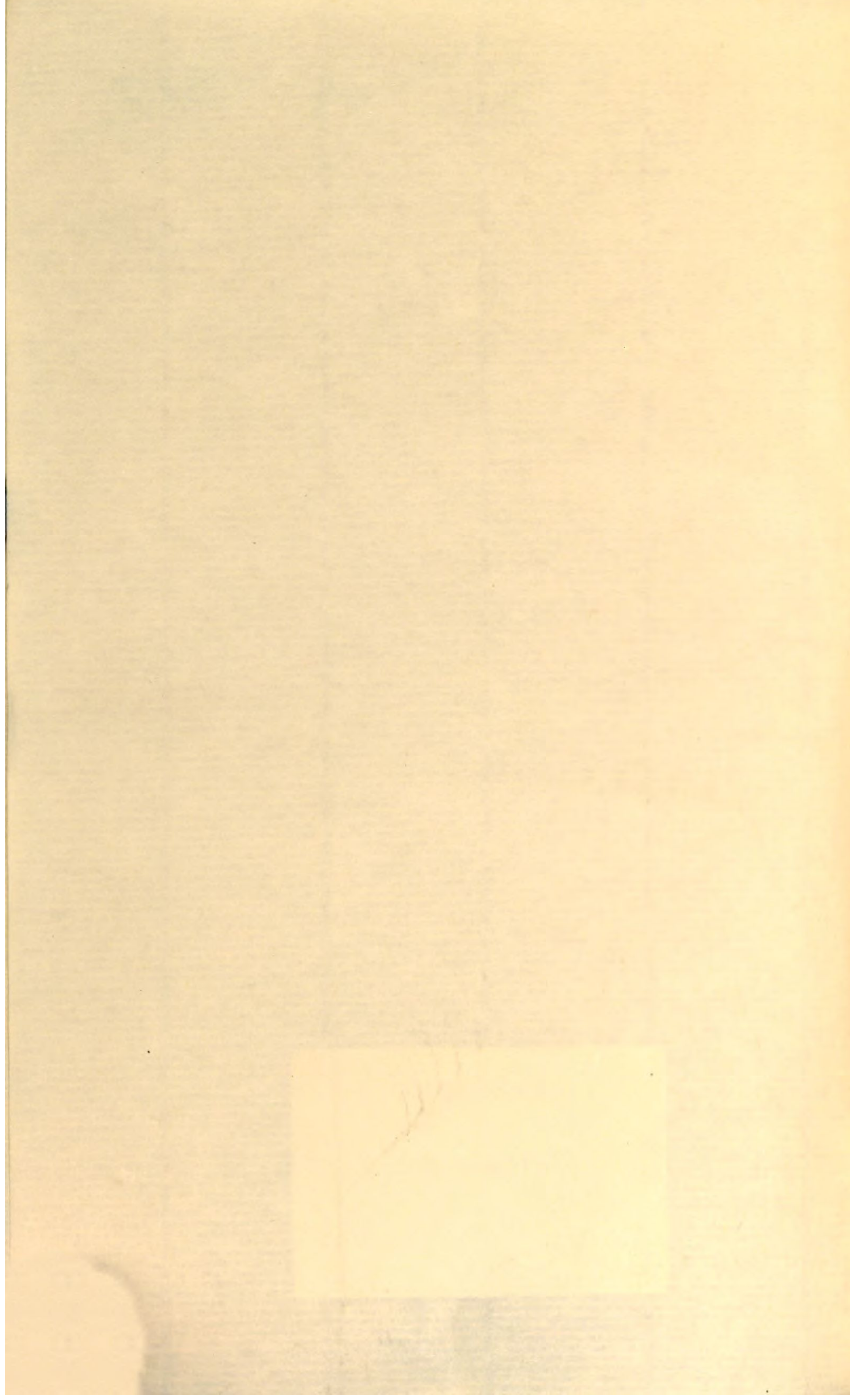


<36635966320016

<36635966320016

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek







EVENINGS

WITH

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.

VOL. I.

72<sup>on</sup> G



HELVETICA

1771

PRINCE CAMBRESIS





EVENINGS

WITH

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS,

SECOND CONSUL,

ARCH-CHANCELLOR OF THE EMPIRE, DUKE OF PARMA,

&c. &c. &c.

BY BARON LANGON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1837.



EVENINGS

WITH

PRINCE CAMBAGES

SECOND CONSUL

AMBA

BY BARON LANGON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL I

LONDON

HENRY COBBURN PUBLISHER

LONDON:  
SCHULZE AND CO. 13, POLAND STREET.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE volumes here presented to the public contain a faithful record of Conversations which the author had the happiness to enjoy with the distinguished personages whose names authenticate the extraordinary facts they related.

The evening parties, to which Prince Cambacérès had the kindness to admit me, were composed of the old friends of the ex-chancellor of the Empire. In summer in his garden, and in winter in his saloon or his cabinet, Prince Cambacérès was the soul of an interesting circle, presenting an intellectual feast — to which, each visitor contributed his contingent.

The old and the new systems, the Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire and the incipient Restoration, furnished the texts of these Conversations. The most important events often formed subjects of narration and discussion ; as for example—the death of the Duke d'Enghien ; the cabal which gave birth to the imperial government ; the misunderstandings with the Pope ; the invasion of Spain ; Napoleon's divorce ; scenes



in the Tuileries, Saint-Cloud, Malmaison, Fontainebleau ; and finally, as it were by way of episodes, came the marvels of the campaigns of Italy and Egypt.

It was my good fortune to hear events of the most deep and stirring interest described by persons who had witnessed them, and, in many instances, by those who had acted conspicuous parts in them. These descriptions, instead of being introduced by the dull common-place preliminary — *It is said*, or, *I have heard*, rivetted the attention of the listener by such words as :— *One day, when the Emperor sent for me*, or, *Robespierre, addressing me, said*, &c. &c. The distinguished visitors of Prince Cambacérès could truly say, in reference to the scenes they described :—“ *J'étais là quand telle chose advint.*”

In the arrangement of my materials, I have not observed any chronological regularity. I present them to the reader nearly in the order, or, to speak more correctly, the disorder, in which I find them collected in my notes. I give the Conversations as they occurred, and, consequently, without regard to unity of time, place, or subject. The merit of the work rests solely on the value of the materials of which it is composed ; and, in submitting those materials to the press, I have been actuated by the spirit of truth, and not by the vanity of authorship.

L. L. L.



# CONTENTS

## OF

### THE FIRST VOLUME.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| The author visits Prince Cambacérès in 1814—Count Jules de Polignac—Count Réal—Count Fabre de l'Aude—Disclosure of the circumstances which caused the trial of Louis XVI to terminate in the sentence of death—Scene in the National Convention—The two Robespierres, Legendre, Saint-Just, Lebas, Couthon, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, Fouquier-Tinville, Santerre, Carrier and Lebon—Cambacérès and the Duke of Orleans—Extraordinary statement made by the Duke—First interview between Cambacérès and General Bonaparte—Bonaparte and Count Fabre de l'Aude—Unpublished correspondence—A remarkable phrase twice repeated—An anecdote of 1797—Napoleon at the Museum in 1807—The Author's conversation with him—Political sentiments of the youth of France in 1814. | 1    |

#### CHAPTER II.

Cambacérès and Carnot at the Palais Royal on the 10th of August 1792—David the Painter—His disavowal of a



phrase often attributed to him—Pretended list of the condemned—Alarm of the Jacobins—Théroigne de Méricourt—Unpublished details relating to the 10th of August—Count Rœderer's visit to the Tuileries—A mysterious message—A Conversation with Marie-Antoinette—Louis XVI—Curious disclosures—Rœderer's account of the events of the 10th of August—Cambacérès relates the circumstances which preceded the 18th Fructidor—Consultation between Cambacérès, Talleyrand, Barras, Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant—Dialogue between Cambacérès and Barras—An interview with Barthélemy—The Prince de C....—Anecdotes—The Royalists' plot discovered—Carnot's account of his escape—Details not published in his Memoirs—Interview between Napoleon and David the Painter—The picture of the coronation—Discussion between Napoleon and Count Fabre de l'Aude respecting the restoration of titles and armorial bearings—The cock and the eagle—Napoleon suggests the re-establishment of monarchy—Curious details. . 53

### CHAPTER III.

Secret audience granted by His Majesty Louis XVIII to Cambacérès—Carnot's Memorial—Gloomy forebodings—How their fulfilment might be avoided—A comic scene with three serious characters—Freemasons and White Penitents—Anecdote of the Princess Borghese—Madame Mère—Story of a Vampire related by Fouché, when Minister of the Police—The Lady of the Forest, a Languedocian anecdote—Mysterious disappearances—Baron Pasquier, the Prefect of Police—Parisian thieves and swindlers—The diamond shoe-buckles—The pretended Russian Prince and the *parure* of diamonds—The snuff-box and the robber duped—Robespierre and the English—A proposed marriage between Robespierre and a Royal Princess—Robespierre's blue coat, and bouquet of tri-coloured



|                                                                                                                                                           | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| flowers—A story related by Tallien—A second proposition for a marriage between Robespierre and a Princess—True cause of the death of the Duke of Orleans. | 122  |

## CHAPTER IV.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Duke of Otranto—Police disclosures—A lady of quality in the pay of the police—Snare laid to entrap the Polignacs—A gang of thieves betrayed—Love and Police—A mysterious billet—Fouché's rendez-vous—The discreet porter—Discovery of murders committed by the Countess Polvère—Poison and somnambulism—The double lady, an optical phenomenon—The General and the Pilgrim—The brigands and the crucifix—Singular vision of Louis-Sebastian Mercier—Apparition seen by Napoleon and Josephine. | 187 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER V.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| The Marquis de Maniban—Remarks on the old French Magistracy—Emoluments and duties of a Parliament Counsellor—The Doyen's mule, a Toulousian anecdote—Opinions respecting the guilt of the Calas family—Victims sacrificed by the Jacobins to revenge Calas—Napoleon's intention of restoring the old Parliaments—His conversation with Cambacérès on that subject—Remarks of the Duke d'Angoulême relative to the old Parliaments—Scheme for a gallant intrigue at the Court of the Tuileries—Base speculations on Napoleon's gallantry—Beautiful reply of the Emperor to a petition of the Empress Josephine—Military anecdotes—Secret mission to England in 1811—Plan for inducing the Bourbons to renounce their claim to the throne of France—Prince Talleyrand's loss of memory—Madame de N....—Unpublished letter of Fouché—Madame de N....'s visit to Hartwell—Her letter to Prince Cambacérès—The Count de La Châtre— |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|



The Duke of Orleans—The Count de Blacas—Description of His Majesty Louis XVIII—Père Elysée—The Duchess d'Angoulême—Her charitable disposition —The Duke de Berry—His morganatic marriage—His two daughters—Napoleon's reception of the Royal message—A celebrated remark of Napoleon—Explanation of the occasion on which it was made. . . . . 231

## CHAPTER VI.

Louis Sebastien Mercier—Details hitherto unpublished, relating to the assassination of Marat—Trial and execution of Charlotte Corday—The source of her fanaticism explained—Napoleon's belief in fatality—His courage and disregard of personal danger —The Imperial Chamberlains—Example of courtly meanness—The gilded weathercock—An ungrateful chamberlain on the 20th of March—An anecdote for the edification of honest men—Wise maxims of Cambacérès—Adventures of a courtier from 1787 to 1830—Amusing letter from a provincial lady to a friend in Paris — Missive from an ambitious poet — Literary discussion—The classic school and the romantic school—Cause of literary failures and disappointments—Prevalence of suicide—Literary opinions of Cambacérès—Rétif de la Bretonne—Chenier and his *Epistle to Voltaire*—Napoleon's displeasure, and Chenier's punishment. . . . . 288

## CHAPTER VII.

Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely—His portrait and character—Special value set upon him by Napoleon—Sharp and unpublished sayings of the Emperor—Count Regnaud in 1814—The five assassinations—Romantic chapter in the life of a counsellor of state—Poison and chocolate, an anecdote of the days of the Empire—Baron



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| de Puymaurin—M. de C.....—Story of an imperial<br>spy related by M. de Puymaurin—Incredible and disin-<br>terested language of M. Benoit, an ex-minister of state<br>—Conversation with Cambacérès on the probable return of<br>Napoleon—Unpublished letter of the latter written at the<br>close of 1814—Tribulations of an ex-grand dignitary—The<br>female chapter, an anecdote of the Restoration—The dearly<br>paid bride's clothes of a maiden espoused without a por-<br>tion—Persons going a-begging—The actress and the win-<br>dow—A beggar who has lost his memory; stories of the<br>present day—The Emperor and a grognard—Unpublished<br>and anecdotal letters of Napoleon to Josephine concern-<br>ing the battle of Austerlitz—The black leg and the joke, a<br>fantastic anecdote. | 337 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

### FRONTISPIECE TO VOL. I.

Portrait of Napoleon.

### FRONTISPIECE TO VOL. II.

Portrait of Prince Cambacérès.



# EVENINGS

WITH

## PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.

---

### CHAPTER I.

The author visits Prince Cambacérès in 1814—Count Jules de Polignac—Count Réal—Count Fabre de l'Aude—Disclosure of the circumstances which caused the trial of Louis XVI to terminate in the sentence of death—Scene in the National Convention—The two Robespierres, Legendre, Saint-Just, Lebas, Couthon, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, Fouquier-Tinville, Santerre, Carrier and Lebon—Cambacérès and the Duke of Orleans—Extraordinary statement made by the Duke—First interview between Cambacérès and General Bonaparte—Bonaparte and Count Fabre de l'Aude—Unpublished correspondence—A remarkable phrase twice repeated—An anecdote of 1797—Napoleon at the Museum in 1807—The Author's conversation with him—Political sentiments of the youth of France in 1814.

THE consequences of the European war having compelled me to leave Italy in February 1814,



I returned to France and took up my residence at Carcassonne. The restoration ensued, and, in the August following, I proceeded to Paris. On my arrival in that capital, I lost no time in calling on Prince Cambacérès. He still resided at the old Hotel de Monaco, where he fixed his abode when the demolition of the Hotel d'Elbeuf compelled him, in 1809, to remove from the Place du Carrousel. His new residence was situated in the Rue Saint-Dominique. Her Royal Highness the Duchess dowager of Orleans purchased it from him after the Hundred Days; and she died there. The council of state now holds its sittings in that hotel. What next will be its destiny? Houses, like empires, often change masters. The chronicles of the palaces and hotels of Paris might furnish matter for a few amusing volumes.

When, on saluting the Prince, I recollected the many stirring events which had occurred within the space of a few short months, I felt unable to conceal my emotion. His manner was marked by his accustomed kindness and amiability:

“How is this?” said he. “You turn to the setting sun! Do you profess the worship of sinking stars?”

“Monseigneur,” replied I, “your highness overwhelmed me with favours in the days of



your power. I can never cease to cherish a grateful remembrance of them."

"Leon," said he, "if you knew how basely I have been forsaken. Messieurs so and so, (he named about ten or a dozen persons,) are at the Tuileries... But, I am delighted to see you. Whenever you have an hour to spare, especially in the evening, come and see me, and we will talk over the past."

"Yes, and we will build in the regions of chimera, castles in the air for the future."

"The future! Alas! we have nothing to look for in the future. The Emperor has closed every chance against himself. The Bourbons will reign for ever."

"I do not think so."

"Indeed! and pray what inspires you with that doubt?"

"A line of La Fontaine; that writer whose works are an inexhaustible mine, in which every thing is to be found. In the fable of *l'Ours et l'Amateur*, you will find this maxim:

'Rien n'est si dangereux qu'un ignorant ami.' "

"It is very true."

"For example, I passed a few days at Carcassonne with Count Jules de Polignac. Two strange hallucinations have taken possession of his mind: one is the complete return to the old



régime ; and the other, that France can never be saved until he himself is made prime minister. He repeated this nonsense over and over, and made it the subject of a hundred arguments."

"What a singular man he is !"

"He is a pure specimen of loyalty and of exalted piety ; a man of the most amiable disposition and manners, but of the most complete incapacity. There is no junior clerk in any of our public offices, who is not better qualified to be a minister than the Count."

"So much the worse, for he is very influential now, and will be very powerful by and bye. But he will see—he will reflect, and will learn to judge of things more accurately."

"Monseigneur, there are people who close their eyes that they may not see, and stop their ears that they may not hear. We have many such in France, now."

Count Réal was announced. His highness uttered an exclamation of joy.

"How, Count ! is it you ? I have not seen you this age."

RÉAL.—I go out but little : the weather is so bad.

He looked at me with an air of doubt.

THE PRINCE.—Oh ! he is one of ourselves. You may speak freely.

He introduced me. My humble name was



unknown to Count Réal; but his Serene Highness' guarantee was of course sufficient to insure full confidence in me. The Count again made some remarks upon the weather, which he intended to be figurative, and expressed his fears that it would be very stormy. The republicans distrusted the Bourbons, and certainly without reason; for their forbearance, indulgence, and clemency, knew no bounds; and, in 1814, it might have been truly said that the Bourbons alone *had forgotten every thing*.

Count Fabre de l'Aude next dropped in. The Count was a magistrate and a politician of the good old school, distinguished for probity and parsimonious economy; but, at the same time, a warm hearted man, and ever ready to serve his friends: in short, he had no enemies, except those who were ungrateful for his kindness. He was an able *financier* and a most accurate calculator. Accounts never became confused in his hands. Napoleon esteemed and appreciated his merit, and frequently appealed to his advice in private; though he never conferred on him any other reward than the functionless post of *procureur-général* of the *conseil des sceaux des titres*. After being president of the tribunal, he, of necessity, became a senator: he was created a count with the rest of his colleagues *en masse*, and, at the same time, he



obtained the title of commander of the legion of honour. He was the friend of Cambacérès, and he honoured me with his particular regard, on account of his connexion with my father-in-law, who, during the empire, was a counsellor of the criminal court of Toulouse.

We all entered into conversation without reserve. We spoke of the royal family. Prince Cambacérès, who took every opportunity of clearing himself from the charge of being a regicide, introduced the subject of the King's death. Some observations were made on the political error committed by the Girondins in consenting to the death of Louis XVI.

“ I should like,” said Réal, “ to tell something which I dare say you do not know. I can inform you why, and through whose influence, it was determined that the sentence on the King should be attended by a tragical result.”

We all manifested our curiosity.

Réal stationed himself with his back to the fireplace ; there was no fire. The Prince took his seat in a large arm-chair ; Fabre de l'Aude in another of smaller dimensions ; and I in a chair without arms. The hierarchy being thus arranged, Réal commenced :

“ On the 21st September 1792, about midnight, the National Convention, which had been installed since the morning, had, as a first



operation, and on the proposition of Count Grégoire, resolved to terminate the monarchy by proclaiming the creation of the republic, single and indivisible. I can fancy myself, even now, in that apartment of Robespierre. It was a room on the ground-floor, the entrance to which was through a very shabby antichamber. On the day I have mentioned, there were assembled in the room, Saint-Just, Lebas, Couthon, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, Fouquier-Tinville, Carrier Lebon, Legendre, Santerre, the two Robespierres, (Maximillian and Augustin,) and myself — thirteen in all — an unlucky number. Robespierre the elder made the remark."

"He, Sir?" exclaimed I.

"Yes, he," replied Count Réal.

"Does that surprise you, my young friend?" said Prince Cambacérès. "It is a superstition, to be sure; but there are many similar examples!"

I know one more, thought I to myself, and I recollected certain dinners....but I shall come to this subject hereafter.

"The two sittings of the Convention," murmured Réal, "had been stormy, and, though the proclamation of the republic had been carried almost unanimously, yet it met with opposition from a few discontented spirits, who complained that the important measure had not been sufficiently matured and discussed. Carrier alluded



to the dissatisfaction of Gensonné, upon which Maximillian Robespierre observed :

“ Gentlemen, this Gironde is an assemblage of Tartufes.”

LEGENDRE. — No matter ; on the 10th of August, they put their shoulders to the wheel nobly.

ROBESPIERRE. — Parbleu ! They did indeed. And, if the Château had gained the day, they would all have been hanged and we with them.

LEGENDRE. — Then they are not for the tyrant ?

ROBESPIERRE. — They are for the monarchy. They want a king.

BARRÈRE. — Or a president.

AUGUSTIN. — It is the same thing.

RÉAL. — No.

SAINT-JUST. — Yes. It matters not, king or president ; two heads in one cap ; a Philip VII., instead of a Louis XVI. If such are to be the results, what have we been labouring for ? Those gentlemen of the Gironde are not quite so great as their own ambition. I would lay a good wager that they have already disposed of all the posts in the ministry, and sent us a-packing.

A discussion now arose on another subject. None of the assembly were favourable to Égalité, who had just then assumed that absurd title. All vowed to unite firmly against him.

ROBESPIERRE (with a look like that of a wolf



thirsting for blood).—Parbleu ! gentlemen, we might strike a grand blow.

ALL.—How ?

ROBESPIERRE (lowering his voice).—This is among ourselves. What would you give to him who would furnish you with the means of so completely degrading Égalité, that he should have no refuge but the grave ; and so deeply embroil the royalists with the Gironde, that any treaty, armistice, or adjustment, should become impossible ?

LEBAS.—Diable ! That would be excellent ! and have you discovered such a plan ?

ROBESPIERRE.—Yes, if you are not faint-hearted.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.—Proofs of our courage are not wanting !

BARRÈRE (with an expression of alarm).—This is something serious.

ROBESPIERRE.—Gentlemen, to serious evils, we must apply serious remedies. By proclaiming the republic, we have passed the rubicon. Let us continue our march ; Louis must be brought to judgment, condemned to death, and executed.

ALL.—Ah !

SANTERRE.—The King condemned to death ! the constitution declares him inviolable.

ROBESPIERRE.—Lebas, Couthon, Réal, Saint-



Just, in short all of us here, except Fouquier and yourself, are also inviolable, by virtue of the same constitution; and yet, if the republic should demand our heads, we must forfeit them, in spite of that same constitution.

RÉAL.—Gentlemen, it appears to me that Robespierre is in the wrong. The King cannot be tried.

AUGUSTIN.—Silence, aristocrat! Agent of Pitt and Coburg!

RÉAL.—I say we are overstepping our power.

CARRIER.—We are all-powerful against a tyrant.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE.—It is certain that if the head of Capet fall with the concurrence of Egalité and the Girondins, they will get into terrible disgrace with the respectable class of people.

SAINT-JUST.—What do you mean, by respectable people, Fouquier? Are we brigands?

FOUQUIER.—Words have changed their meanings. The term respectable people (*gens de bien*) is synonymous with traitors;—*canaille* means good citizens.

BARRÈRE.—Take the life of the King! It is a grand--patriotic idea! Will it be popular?

ROBESPIERRE.—Yes! with the aid of *Sainte Peur*. (Laughter.) That Saint whom Danton created on the 2nd and 3rd instant, and who



now keeps Paris in awe. Frighten the Plain, and it will vote with us; the Girondins will be for the cause of liberty. As to Egalité, he will commit——

RÉAL.—What is the *Plain*?

ROBESPIERRE.—The lower benches of the assembly—which are occupied by the insane moderates, those monsters who recommend concord, when blood ought to flow in torrents. The *Mountain* shall be the high benches, whence we will overwhelm the plain, and command the *marsh*. By the latter term, I mean the centre, which is occupied by those sleepers, who awake only to vote with the majority.

“It was,” continued Réal, addressing us, “the elder of the Robespierres who, on the very first day of the Convention, created those terms which subsequently became the watch-words of so much agitation and crime. As to me, I felt myself ill at ease in this conventicle. It was urged that the question was inopportune, and a warm discussion ensued on this point. Robespierre knew that Danton, Fabre d’Églantine, Camille-Desmoulins, Hébert, Brissot, Louvet, Condorcet, Dumouriez, Valence, Gorsas, Fonfrède, Barras, Tallien, Marat, Manuel-Pétion, Voidel, Genlis, Le Pelletier-Saint-Fargeau, Château-Neuf, Randon-Vadier, and others belonged to the *Égalité* faction, round whom the Giron-



dins, in despair of success, would rally. To put the King to death, was to complete the annihilation of royalty: to oblige Égalité to co-operate in the regicide, was to render him for ever incapable of wearing the crown, by whatever title it might be offered to him. Thus Égalité, though a participator in the crime, would reap no advantage from it: the whole benefit would revert to Robespierre and his party."

These considerations had their due weight in the minds of the majority of the assembly, and determined them to take the decisive step. It was resolved that the King should be brought to trial, as soon as the urgent business, then in progress, could be settled; and that the trial, when once commenced, should be actively carried on to its close. Carrier was heard to observe, "Even though Capet should escape, a more lucky 6th of October, 20th of June, or 10th of August, will rid us of him."

"Fool!" replied Robespierre, "what shall we gain by this measure, if it be executed by violence? We must have a well grounded charge, an open investigation, counsel for the accused, in short, a trial lawfully instituted, maintained, and decided. His head must fall in due legal form: this will produce an effect; will make Europe tremble, and secure to us the support of



the citizens—for they will be our accomplices. We shall receive addresses of congratulation and adherence from every commune and town in France.”

The sitting rose. Mademoiselle Duplay, Maximillian Robespierre’s mistress, entered and announced Marat. I signified my intention of retiring. Fouquier-Tinville and Santerre went away with me. The latter passed through the Rue Saint-Honoré. He seemed to be going to the Palais-Royal, for he took leave of us on the Place, and entered one of the turnings leading to the Palais. Fouquier and I continued our course along the Rue Saint-Honoré. I lodged at No. 75. When we were alone, Fouquier said to me :

“I could wager that he is going to denounce us. He is sold to Orleans. To whom do you belong?”

“To myself.”

“Bah! That is madness! In these times, every man must devote himself to a leader. Join Robespierre.”

“Why? A member of the sovereign people ought to maintain his independence.”

“You are wrong. You will be set down as a royalist.”

“I can show proofs to the contrary. I am a friend to the republic.”



“ I assure you, gentlemen,” pursued Réal, addressing himself to us, “ I spoke the truth. At that time, I was a sincere democrat. I have changed my opinions since then, and I am now a monarchist.” He then resumed his narrative.

“ Fouquier appeared to me to be a man already sold to Robespierre. This threw a light upon me. I was averse to the sentence of death. I put myself on the watch, and I could plainly perceive that the plan which had been proposed at Robespierre’s, was gradually developing itself in other places. Égalité, though well cautioned, could neither avert the trial, nor refrain from taking part in it. He, the King’s nearest relation, accepted the office of his judge : from that moment, he was lost. He was afterwards regarded with a feeling of repugnance ; and it was scarcely considered a subject of regret, when, in his turn, he mounted the scaffold. Thus ends my story.”

We rose from our seats, and thanked Réal. Excited by the compliments which Fabre de l’Aude and I lavished on the ex-senator, Prince Cambacérès rubbed his hands, and said :

“ It is indeed a very interesting story. Would you like to hear one which I can tell you, and which relates to the same period ?”

“ Yes !” we all exclaimed with one voice ; and the Prince thus commenced—



“ When I was chosen a member of the National Convention by my Department (Herault), I lodged in Paris, at the Hotel de Bearn, Rue Feydeau. I occupied a modest set of apartments on the third story without an anti-chamber. One morning, about eight o'clock, I heard a knocking at my door: the key was on the outside. Come in, said I, and two persons entered. One was Voidel, and the other was the Duke of Orleans. I rose from my chair and began to stammer out some apologies for my humble abode.

“ ‘ Never mind, my dear colleague,’ said Voidel. ‘ I have come to introduce you to one of ourselves ; an excellent patriot, animated with the desire to render France happy. He wishes to know you, and requested that I would bring him here.’

“ I again commenced my protestations. I could not conceive why the first Prince of the blood, instead of summoning me to his palace, should come to visit me in my obscure retreat. As to the Duke, his manner was embarrassed and restrained. His exquisite tact evidently reproached him for the course he was pursuing. Voidel took his leave, saying he had some visits to make, and left me alone with the Most Serene Highness of the day. The Duke of Orleans, opening the conversation, said in a low tone of voice :



“ ‘My dear colleague, you see before you a very unfortunate man. I am surrounded by enemies who traduce me, who misrepresent my actions, and even my thoughts. At first, I was accused of conspiracy against Louis XVI. ; now it is alleged that I aspire to the attainment of despotic power, under the title of President, Protector, Consul or anything else they may invent. It is certain that my sentiments are those of the French people. For upwards of four years, I have been fighting in the cause of France, and serving her with my fortune and my influence ; my eldest sons are in the army ; I have renounced all distinction. Yesterday evening (this interview occurred on the 17th of September,) I went even farther—I went very far—perhaps a greater length than I should have gone . . . . In short, by the help of a patriotic fiction, I endeavoured to prove my aversion to continue the course that has been pursued.’ ”

“ He paused and hesitated, then said a few words, and paused again. He looked at me steadfastly, and I observed that he turned pale.

“ ‘You doubtless know what I did yesterday at the Jacobins ?’ ”

“ No, Monseigneur, I replied ; I have been very unwell for the last few days, and have been confined to my room. Your serene highness and Voidel are the first visitors who have broken my solitude ; consequently, I cannot know



any thing that Monseigneur may have done or said.

“ ‘Why do you constantly repeat Monseigneur and your highness? I assure you, my dear colleague, I have voluntarily relinquished those titles and qualifications; therefore, call me simply *Sir*, if you do not choose to call me your colleague; though the latter appellation is the one in which I pride myself.’

“ I bowed. These words surprised me. Where a man derives distinctions from his birth, or social position; or, when he has solicited or accepted distinctions, he ought not to relinquish them voluntarily. For example, would it not be absurd in me to reprove M. Langon, whose superior I have been in the council of state, when he addressed me by the titles of prince and serene highness? In public, I should not have addressed the Duke of Orleans by titles, which were interdicted by law, and still more by prudence; but, in a private interview, I conceived it proper for me to use them, and for him to receive them: but, to proceed with my story.

“ I bowed silently and respectfully, and, after kindly shaking my hand, the Prince thus continued:

“ ‘You must know, then, that urged by the desire of separating myself from the past, to



afford no pretext for calumny, and in order to be consistent with the new and flattering title of civic adoption, accorded to me by the city of Paris, I thought it incumbent on me to declare, at the meeting of the Jacobins, that—I said it jokingly—not exactly jokingly—I was serious, quite serious—Ah, Monsieur de Cambacérès ! if you knew what a difficult position I stand in, and what sacrifices I must make to extricate myself from it !’

“ These broken sentences, and the Prince’s evident hesitation to make me acquainted with something, which he nevertheless wished to tell, roused my curiosity. I sat in silent suspense, with my eyes cast down, puzzled to guess what was to follow these last words ; though I confess all my conjectures were far enough from the truth. At length, after some equally mysterious circumlocution, the prince informed me that, on the preceding evening, urged by some fatal inspiration, he had conceived the notion that, by raising doubts of the legitimacy of his birth, he should succeed in mitigating, as far as concerned himself, the violent hatred cherished by the *sans culottes* against the royal family. Doubtless, if he had had time for reflection, he would have resorted to some less ignominious stratagem ; but the unfortunate Prince had one earnest wish to gratify ; and that was to live, and, if possible, to die in France.



“ I hope I am not wanting in due consideration for misfortune ; I am aware of the sacrifices which it is necessary to make to circumstances, and I knew too well, at that time, how presence of mind may be paralyzed by the fear of a speedy and horrible death. Nevertheless, what I heard from the Prince filled me with amazement, and my countenance no doubt expressed the bewilderment into which the Duke’s extraordinary disclosure threw me. I was at a loss to comprehend how a man, having the good fortune to possess the noblest name in the world, should renounce it, not only without compulsion, but voluntarily ; instead of preferring torture, or death, to the loss of it !

For a moment, I suspected the possibility of a mystification, but I repelled the idea. Since the Prince had ventured to tell me what I had just heard, it must necessarily be true.

“ Ah Monseigneur ! I exclaimed, you speak as Tacitus wrote.

“ ‘ My dear Sir,’ resumed the Prince, ‘ no flattery,—I am fallen. You disapprove of what I have done,—I am sensible of my error ; but, I have a large fortune, children, and friends. I love France, and, rather than quit my country, I would descend to the regions below. Henceforth, I presume they will let me live at my ease, and I trust that the revolution will adopt me



in emulation of the city of Paris. My dear colleague,' he added, drawing his chair closer to mine, 'are you not tired of this state of things? Would you not rejoice to see a change for the better?'

"I should rejoice, said I, eagerly seizing the opportunity to change the conversation, to see the sovereignty of the laws, and the establishment of true principles of wisdom and moderation, without pillage, or bloodshed.

" 'That is what I also wish to see : it is what you desire *in common with me.*'

"This was coming to the point. I smiled. I knew the Prince to be artful, and I was fully sensible of the danger I should incur by entering into his indirect confidence. He, encouraged by what he imagined to be an approving movement of my lips, thus proceeded :

" 'Yes, if I should be deemed worthy—capable of conducting affairs prudently—whether under the title of president, protector, first consul, or even dauphin—I pledge my word that men of your stamp should compose my council, and that I should feel pleasure in making you amends beforehand, for the injustice of fortune.'

"*My dear colleague*, said I, pronouncing the qualification emphatically, I thank you for this proof of your confidence. I am flattered by it, and, in return, I promise to bury it in inviolable



secrecy. As to the subject to which it refers, I think it at present inopportune. See how we are situated. Consider what you were forced to say yesterday, and what would be the result of a demand for sovereign power, even for you.

“ ‘ Yes, I see the difficulty— but, with perseverance, numerous and warm friends, and money judiciously applied — I have opened my mind to you, because I know you to be prudent and intelligent. Voidel has likewise spoken to you . . . . I have all the leading men of the cap of liberty party, besides the Girondins with whom I am treating : — I have Marat, Danton, Robespierre, Santerre, Barras, Condorcet !’

“ I let him run on, though I was not a little astonished at the array of names which he had set down on his list. But men situated as the Duke then was, are so ready to delude themselves by chimeras. To hear him, I might have supposed he could count on two thirds of the Convention.

“ And Louis XVI, said I, what of him ?

“ ‘ Ah ! there is the embarrassing point. But Louis would listen to reason, were it not for the Queen. It has been proposed to me . . . . but no . . . . I will never consent to it . . . . I should shrink with horror from a sceptre stained by the blood of my relation, and of him who



was my sovereign.' (This was said on the 17th of September," observed Cambacérès. "Mark that, Gentlemen!) 'It is necessary that the King should leave the Temple.... should quit France, and then...'

"Here the Duke of Orleans paused, and remained for some minutes absorbed in his own reflections—then, drawing out his watch, he said:—

" 'Ten o'clock already; Pétion is waiting for me at Mousseaux. He is one of our party—I hope you will soon know them all... Adieu, Monsieur Cambacérès. Then the matter is understood between us. Adieu! Speak to Voidel, or Laclos, about the arrangements. They are my familiars.' (laughing.)

"Indeed, Prince, said I, then what are we to be called?"

" 'Oh! the parties present are always excepted. You will dine to-morrow at the Palais Royal. Adieu!'

"He left me, and I began to reflect on his conduct of the preceding evening. Into what a gulph had he plunged, in the hope of mounting a throne! How was he to extricate himself from the difficulties with which he was surrounded? What magnanimity! what heroism would be required!

"I went to dine next day at the Palais Royal;



but I had no opportunity of conversing privately, either with Laclos, or Voidel. Subsequent events carried me insensibly so far from Egalité, that I passed before his scaffold to fill the place assigned to me as the second person in the state. I have had an important part to play.”

Cambacérès had become quite animated, whilst relating the above story, and, when it was ended, he said, rubbing his hands: “Gentlemen, this reminds me of my first interview with another personage much more worthy your attention—I mean the Emperor.”

FABRE DE L’AUDE.—Where did your Serene Highness first see him?

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS. — You shall hear. About the end of the year 1794, after the 9th Thermidor, there was a president of the committee of war, named Aubry. He was a man of no capacity, without a particle of military talent, and, consequently, the avowed enemy of all superior merit. For example, he never pardoned any one who got promoted before him and left him in the rear. Thus, he was furiously enraged against a certain Corsican, who had taken Toulon, in spite of the stupid Car-teaux, the imbecile Doppet, and the English; and who, having subsequently become a general, completed, in the space of a few days, a brilliant campaign on the other side of the Alps.



Aubry owed a bitter grudge to the little general, whom he often reproached for his youth. ‘*One soon grows old on the field of battle, and I am getting on,*’ was the reply to these reproaches. Aubry got up a malicious charge, and the result was, that the general, at once young and old, was suspended. Amidst the blundering and mismanagement which then prevailed in all matters of business, I was made one of the committee of war. Imagine how well fitted I was for the appointment. The case of the suspension was presented to me, accompanied by a report of disobedience. Aubry made a very long face. He wanted the case to be regarded as a matter of vast importance, and was astonished to find that I treated it with indifference. I should have been as much astonished if he had presumed to pronounce an opinion on a question of jurisprudence! I contented myself with signing the paper, in my turn, and throwing all the responsibility on him.

Some time after this, when I was lodging in the Rue Chabannais, I was startled by a knock at my door early one morning. The knock was somewhat louder than that given by the Duke of Orleans, when he had honoured me with a visit about two years previously. I requested my visitor to enter, and I saw before me a little,



thin, sallow complexioned man. His ill arranged hair was hanging down in the curls called *oreilles de chien*, which were in fashion at that time. He was very badly dressed—his boots were too short, his coat too long, his cravat horridly wrinkled, and his hat bearing evidence of long service. Disfigured as he was by these shabby habiliments, I could not help remarking his white and beautifully formed hands, and his mouth, which was inconceivably handsome, especially when animated by either a good natured or a satirical smile. And then his eyes! . . . what eyes they were! . . . as brilliant as those of the lion, or the eagle:—at once gentle, fierce, penetrating and confiding. . . . expressive of sublime genius and magnanimity. His fine teeth, also, attracted my attention. He had, altogether, the air of a sovereign in the garb of a beggar; or, perhaps, I may say he looked like Jupiter, when he visited Baucis and Philemon. Add to this, a full, sonorous and clear toned voice, easy unaffected, yet dignified and commanding, manners. Superiority of intellect was marked in every look and gesture:—in short, his appearance produced upon me an immediate and irresistible fascination. I was under a spell. I felt that I was in the presence of a man who commanded my respect and admiration. Such, at least, is the impression he produced on me at first sight.



FABRE DE L'AUDE.—He made the same impression on me. My first rencontre with him is quite a history.

REAL.—And so is mine. I tremble, even now, when I think of it.

MYSELF.—I shall never forget the first time I saw him.

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—Well, you shall each in your turn describe that memorable day of your lives. Meanwhile, let me proceed with my story.

“ ‘ Citizen ! ’ said my visitor, ‘ I am General Napoleon Bonaparte, whom you have unjustly suspended. ’

“ General, I replied, I fear there has been some mistake. Doubtless there was an error . . . . and I am afraid I committed it.

“ ‘ That is wisely said ! None but fools lay claim to infallibility, the Pope excepted. ’

“ Truly, General, said I, laughing, you would be fully justified in blaming me, if I had considered the case as anything more than a matter of form. It would have been most absurd in me to have pretended to judge you as a military man. I merely saw the public functionaries refusing obedience to the constituted authority. The fact is clear. You must admit that I acted as any other person would do in my place. But now to deal candidly with you ; I willingly



acknowledge that I treated you with great injustice. You are one of those who ought to be advanced, instead of being kept back among the common crowd. I know we are indebted to you for the taking of Toulon, and the taking of Toulon saved the republic. Your merit excites envy. People who have no talent cannot endure those who have any. But, have a little patience ; you will work your way to your proper rank, if they do not speedily assign it to you as they should do.

“ You see,” continued Cambacérès, “ that my compliments were well turned, or, as M. Pourceaugnac says, *assez bien troussés*. The General had come with the intention of reproving me : and we parted on friendly terms. He called on me again, admitted me to his confidence, and opened a correspondence with me about Italy and Egypt ;—in short, he admitted me to his friendship . . . . You know the rest. Now, Count Fabre de l’Aude, let us hear your story.”

“ I knew General Bonaparte only by name,” said Count Fabre de l’Aude, “ by the brilliant reputation he had earned at Toulon, and his first campaign of the Alps. There was at that time in the south of France, a Sieur P . . . . an ill disposed, envious, malignant creature who, in addition to all his other bad qualities, was avaricious and eager to grasp money, no matter



by what means. One day, this miserable fellow entered my apartments pale, dejected, and apparently almost frightened out of his senses.

“ You will be hanged to a certainty, said I. They are in pursuit of you.

“ ‘ Alas ! I am innocent ! My only object was to save the republic.’

“ To save the republic, truly, by your roguery. I know you well.

“ ‘ For the sake of my poor father, of my mother whom you respect, of my brother....’

“ It is lucky for you that you are connected with so many respectable people. Let me hear what you have to say for yourself,—

“ At this moment a loud knocking was heard at the outer door. (I then lodged in the Rue Coq-Heron, No. 63) I trembled, and P.... uttering a cry of terror, looked around him with an air of bewilderment : then, after a moment's pause, he made a spring, and, by a miracle of agility, he leaped completely over my bed and concealed himself by crouching down in the space between the bedstead and the wall. The door opened and a man entered . . . . But why should I attempt to describe him ? . . . It was General Bonaparte. The portrait which Prince Cambacérès just now drew of him, is better than any I could trace. His eye flashed with rage, and, though innocent, I was almost as much awed as the criminal.



“ ‘ I presume I am in the presence of Citizen Fabre de l’Aude ?’

“ Yes, citizen, and I have the honour to address General Bonaparte ?

“ ‘ The same : I have come to inquire whether you can furnish me with any information relating to a villain, a forger, a calumniator. I will make an end of him, Citizen Five-Hundred, if I catch him. The rascal shall die by my hand. He comes from Carcassonne.’

“ He does.

“ ‘ He is of a respectable family ?’

“ Yes.

“ ‘ Whom he has disgraced, but whom I will avenge.’

“ What offence has he committed General ?

“ ‘ He has been corresponding with the English cabinet under my name, and has denounced me to the Directory as a traitor to my country. What do you think of that, Citizen Fabre ?’

“ That any one has a good right to hang him, except yourself, General Bonaparte. You are a hero.

“ ‘ I am a man of honour, and it is my duty to punish the villain. I request that you will give me his address.’

“ And I request that you will grant his pardon.



“ I then made some observations, with the view of convincing the General how much he would degrade himself by taking revenge on so contemptible an enemy.

“ ‘ You are right,’ said he, after a moment’s reflection, and raising his hand to his eyes, ‘ I will spare his life, but it must be only on condition of your making him retract and confess his turpitude. Let this point be clearly understood, without any room for evasion. The explanation must leave him black as ink, and me white as snow. On that condition, I will spare him, but on no other.’

“ This ultimatum, which was delivered in a voice of thunder, was not calculated to meet with objection, or resistance. I promised in the name of P.... all that was required, and the General then said :

“ ‘ Citizen Five-Hundred, (these were his words) I am delighted to have made your acquaintance. Come and see me ; I am going to be married to-morrow, and it will not be long before I quit Paris. Honest men should meet together.’

“ I accepted his invitation to visit him. After his marriage, I went to pay my respects to Mme. Bonaparte. The newly married couple admitted me to their intimacy; and I did not prove myself undeserving of it. I met at their



house one of my colleagues, Ozun, who was, like myself, a member of the Council of Five-Hundred. He was a man of considerable talent, and was devotedly attached to General Bonaparte. Thus, a double link of friendship was formed between us. After his departure for Italy, he wrote to me often. A year had not elapsed, when Ozun, in the course of conversation, one day said to me :

“ ‘ The General might be placed at the head of the government. His talent is universal, and he would govern and legislate as well as he fights. In short, he is a man without an equal.’ ”

“ I acquainted the General with what Ozun had said. His reply was, that the pear was not ripe, and that he never hurried things. However, our indiscretion did not injure us in his good opinion : on the contrary, I think it helped to recommend us to favour, as subsequent occurrences proved.

“ A short time after this, I had an opportunity of acquainting Bonaparte with the ill-feeling entertained towards him by the Directory ; but he knew it without my information. I was a spectator, rather than an actor, on the occasion of the 18th Fructidor. I observed the dissatisfaction of Barras. At one moment, he attempted to turn against the General the revolution which



had been undertaken with his concurrence. This circumstance is not generally known : I will explain it to you some other time. Barras failed to accomplish his base design. Nevertheless, Bonaparte heard of it, and the lion began to roar. To appease him, it was proposed that he should go to Egypt. He departed, and our correspondence continued. One day, when I was writing to him, I overstepped the bounds of my reserve. Shall I give you a specimen of my style of writing at that time ?”

We all with one voice signified our eager curiosity. Count Fabre reflected for a few moments, and then repeated to us (such was the retentive power of his memory) a letter couched in nearly the following terms :

Paris, August 12th 1799.

“ General,

“ Things are going from bad to worse. No more victories abroad, and at home nothing but famine, pillage and oppression ; . . . . . abroad neither credit nor respect ; at home, listlessness and want of spirit. We are lost, unless speedily aided by a firm hand. That hand is not in France, nor even in Europe : yet, without it, all will be compromised and ruined.

“ Negotiations have been set on foot with



the Bourbons. Their return now would be fatal to us ; though, perhaps, not so hereafter. Meanwhile, you are lost sight of, and all this is done by four or five men at most ; for the rest of the republic look only to the conqueror of Italy, the hero of Malta and of the Pyramids. You belong to your country, and your proper place is not in Cairo, but in Paris. Come, then, . . . .we anxiously await you. With you we shall be strong ; without you, all is lost. In summoning you hither, I am but the trumpet of the immense majority. You belong not to a few, but to all. Even those who fear you, look to you for their salvation. I send you an exact account of the state of affairs, together with the names of those on whom you may count, and also the names of the hostile and the timid. Examine and reflect. Would you have us turn to Moreau ? surely not—and yet things cannot continue thus. Assistance must come from abroad ; and it depends on you whether it shall come from the south or the north.”

“ After despatching this missive, I was not utterly free from alarm. I was surrounded by rogues, who had a keen scent. However, I escaped detection. Some time afterwards, I received an answer, which I conceived it to be my duty to sacrifice to prudence. This answer was, if my memory serves me, as follows—



“ ‘ One thing is certain, namely, that I have nothing more to do in Egypt....I can easily imagine the embarrassed state of France, badly as she is governed, and fiercely as she is assailed....I am ready to sacrifice myself in her cause. We shall be taxed with ambition, because we draw her out of the abyss....No matter ; let us do our duty, without regarding the clamour of the mob. I knew ——— to be a contemptible fellow, but I did not think him a traitor. The Bourbons!!....*They can never return, except by marching over two hundred thousand dead bodies.....*’ ”

RÉAL.—(interrupting Count Fabre) That is precisely the phrase he used in his letter to Louis XVIII.

COUNT FABRE.—True : it is the same. That only proves how permanently he entertained the idea.

“ ‘ As to Moreau,’ continued Napoleon in his letter, ‘ he may be driven aside with a thrust of one’s shoulder.’ ”

We all laughed at hearing Moreau thus admirably characterized.

“ ‘ I shall speedily rejoin you : the sooner the better. If your notes be correct, the danger is imminent, and the resources immense....I will come, and I will see....’ ”

“ He arrived twenty-five days after I received



the above letter. I need not proceed further ; it would be entering upon too long a story : I reserve the rest for another time. Count Réal, I throw the ball to you. Give us an account of your first interview with General Bonaparte."

COUNT RÉAL.— After the campaigns of Italy, the Directory, with the view of retarding Bonaparte's arrival in Paris, proposed sending him to Rastadt, where negociations for peace were to be opened. Our Directors were afraid of him, and subsequent events proved that their fears were not unfounded. They trembled at the very name of the young General who, in less than two years, had earned a colossal reputation. His glory eclipsed that of all his contemporaries ; and, if the other generals of the republic were ever spoken of, it was only when conversation was exhausted on the theme of General Bonaparte.

I was frequently in company with Barras, and he used to converse with me confidentially. I don't know why it was, but he, more than any of his colleagues, betrayed symptoms of dissatisfaction when he heard praises lavished on General Bonaparte, which, as may be supposed, was not unfrequently. The General was sent to Rastadt, in the hope that he would be detained there till the close of the conferences. But they



little knew him who flattered themselves with this hope. He felt that Paris was his proper place, and there he speedily presented himself.

About two o'clock one morning I was at home, and had retired to bed, when I was alarmed by a knocking at my door. I say alarmed, for at that time every thing excited fear. I called out: who is there?—"I have brought a dispatch from Citizen Director Barras," was the answer. *Diab!e!* I was overwhelmed with forebodings. The candles were lighted, and I opened the fearful missive. It contained only the following words:—

"I beg that my good friend Réal will come to me without a moment's delay."

(Signed)

BARRAS.

At that time, the request of a Director was equivalent to the command of a prince of the old régime. Though greatly fatigued and in want of sleep, I immediately rose. I interrogated the messenger: "Has anything happened?—Is there any conspiracy?" I inquired; but I could obtain no satisfactory answer. I became more and more alarmed, and, having hastily dressed myself, the messenger and I got into a fiacre which was waiting for us at the door:—the coachman smacked his whip, and we drove off.



The Luxembourg was guarded like a garrison, and my conductor had to give various pass words before we reached the cabinet of the director.

Barras was up, and was writing by lamp light. As soon as I entered, he rose from his seat, advanced towards me, and cordially pressed my hand. This reception somewhat cheered me, and helped to dispel the gloomy pictures which my imagination had conjured up.

“ I am afraid you have been roused from your sleep ?” said Barras in a tone of kindness.

“ Indeed I have,” replied I,—“ I was enjoying very sound slumber.”

“ How happy you are to be able to sleep ! ..as to me, I never know the luxury of closing my eyes, except by the help of an opiate, or after being exhausted by the most horrible fatigue.”

“ But you are a Director !”

“ And, like Damocles, the sword is suspended by a hair over my head....Have you heard the news ?”

“ What news ?”

“ Bonaparte has arrived.”

“ When ?”

“ A few hours ago....At midnight. He is an unsettled dissatisfied spirit..He is now storming and raging..”

“ About what ?”



“ Indeed I scarcely know. Somebody, it would seem, has been cramming him with falsehoods and making him believe—”

I could perceive that Barras was embarrassed. He walked about the room with hurried steps. He could not prevail on himself to tell me that Napoleon was jealous, and that a malignant tongue had bred mischief between the General and himself. I dropped a hint on the subject, and Barras, apparently delighted that I had broken the ice, thus proceeded:

“ Yes,” said he, “ one of Bonaparte’s sister’s,” (he did not inform me which of them, but I believe it was the eldest) “ has been telling him some odious tales. His poor wife is inconsolable. I am much annoyed about it. He is determined to make an uproar, and I assure you there is no foundation for it. Now, Réal, I wish you to go to him. . . you can speak coolly and reasonably. Advise him to be prudent: and say I am ready to offer any explanation.”

“ But I am not acquainted with him.”

“ What does that signify? I send you as a messenger of peace. Go!”

“ What, now? At three o’clock in the morning? I could not see him.”

“ You think not?”

“ Most assuredly.”



“ Well, then, go at seven o’clock ; I know he is an early riser.”

I shrugged my shoulders. My mission was a difficult one. But there was no declining it. A Director was then a sort of sovereign. Prince Cambacérès, I believe you were at one time nearly being made a Director ?

THE PRINCE.—Yes, but some obstacle arose. I owe my consular fortune to my exclusion from the Directory. It was the touchstone which convinced Bonaparte that I was not devoted to Barras.

RÉAL.—I received my instructions, and departed, not a little embarrassed. It was three quarters past six when I entered the Rue Chantierine, which had only a few hours previously received its new name of *Rue de la Victoire*. This was a token of respect from the municipality of Paris to the conqueror of Italy and the pacificator of Europe. Instead of presenting its usual solitude, the street was filled by a crowd of persons, all eager to offer incense at the altar of the new deity. The crowd was chiefly composed of military officers, a class of men for whom independence is ill-suited. The equality of the republic had become odious to them ; and they were impatient to serve something or somebody. These heroes on the field of battle, were humble slaves in the presence of



Napoleon. They seemed to have divined his future greatness.

Very few of them succeeded in gaining sight of him ; but no matter—they inscribed their names at the door. I happened to cast my eyes on General C——, a sort of long serpent, who was always creeping at the feet of people in power ; and, consequently, he made his way in the antichambers rather than in the army. He advanced and embraced me.

“ My dear friend,” said he, “ are you very intimate with the General in Chief, Bonaparte ? You are very fortunate, and I envy you. Pray assure him how highly I admire——”

I checked him by observing that I had never yet exchanged words with General Bonaparte. He then turned his back, and wished me good morning. Since then, however, he has made ample amends for his coolness, by abundance of cringing and bowing, when he saw me on the road to fortune. The civilians, (*Messieurs les civils*, as the Prince de Benevento called them) never knew how to pay their court so well as the military.

On this point, we all agreed.

An aid-de-camp, pursued Count Réal, advanced to me : the circumstance of my being a stranger procured me this mark of attention. This aid-de-camp was Junot. He was a hand-



some young man, of pleasing manners. He was devoted to his General and to his country. His ardent courage and other estimable qualities well entitled him to a better fate than that which awaited him. He inquired what I was waiting for.

“To see the General,” I replied; “I am sent by one of the Directors.”

“By which of them?”

“I can name him only to the General.”

Junot bowed and retired. In a few minutes after, a servant to whom I had doubtless been described, entered the room. After looking about, and satisfying himself that I was the person he was in search of, he inquired my name, which I had just given to Junot. I repeated it. The servant then conducted me up a narrow staircase and into an *entresol*, through which I was obliged to creep almost bent double. He opened a door,—I entered,—and found myself within the distance of two feet from General Bonaparte. Darting at me a glance, which I shall always remember, he said:

“What brings you here, citizen?”

“The wish to render justice to a man, who has been calumniated and misrepresented to you; I come——”

“Silence!” exclaimed he in a voice which vibrated through my ears like a peal of thunder,



“no one has been calumniated....I have heard nothing but truth...., and death....”

He paused. I confess I felt so ill at ease that I would rather have been in any other place than where I was. However, I was the messenger of peace, and, making an effort to resume my presence of mind, I repeated what Barras had told me. I maintained his innocence, and pointed out the interest which certain persons had in creating dissension between him and the General. I affirmed that he never could have boasted of that which was utterly false....in short, I wound up my pleading with so much energy, that Bonaparte seized me by the button of my coat, and, with a less gloomy expression of countenance than he had hitherto maintained, said :

“It is possible that I may have been deceived....that they who have reported the mischief may have been its inventors....It is not the first time I have had to defeat a wicked plot of this sort. But, in this case, circumstances were so precisely detailed——”

He stopped short, I perceived that my arguments had produced some effect, and, anxious to follow up my advantage, I observed that the circumstances to which he alluded, were merely unfounded allegations ; —that, on the one hand, there existed a jealousy of his marriage with



a woman of good family and the widow of a man of rank ; whilst, on the other hand, Madame Bonaparte was envied for the attachment which her husband bore her. I adverted to the imprudence and indecorum of making known to the public the malignant inventions of his enemies. Bonaparte was always ready to listen to the voice of reason. His irritation was gradually appeased, and the storm, which at first threatened to burst with such violence, soon passed away. He dismissed me with a conciliatory message. I was overjoyed at my success. I saw him frequently afterwards ; and, at a latter period of his career, he did me the honour to remember me. He gave me an appointment, and I may venture to say that he was satisfied with me.

Count Réal, having finished his story, my turn came, and I related as follows, the most important incident of my life :—

One day, when I was strolling idly about Paris, I happened to enter the Place du Louvre. The Imperial Museum caught my eye, and roused me from my reverie. As I possessed a ticket, which was admissible on all days, I thought I would take advantage of it. I presented my ticket at the door, and, being admitted, I hesitated for a moment whether I should first view the picture gallery, or the apartments



containing the antiques. My lucky star determined my choice in favour of the latter, and this circumstance was not without its influence on the rest of my life.

The day was exceedingly dark and cloudy, and I found the *salles des antiques* almost deserted. Very few visitors were passing through the spacious apartments, and no one was engaged in drawing from the statues. I felt no inclination to break from this solitude, which was congenial with the melancholy state of my feelings at the time. I sauntered about, sometimes gazing on vacancy, and sometimes admiring the sublime specimens of grace and beauty which were grouped around me.

The Diana hunting, that wonder of art, then stood in the apartment which Prudhom had adorned with the productions of his pencil. The statue rivetted my attention, and I stood for some time thoughtful and motionless before that exquisite representation of immortal grace and beauty. Whilst I was thus rapt in admiration, I did not perceive that I was an object of curiosity to a person who had entered the room unperceived by me, and who seemed not a little amused at my enthusiasm, which was the more sincere inasmuch as I was totally abstracted.

The person to whom I allude was of the



middle height ; though, by the effect of an optical delusion (which his presence frequently produced) he appeared to me to be of tall stature. This may be accounted for by the extreme dignity of his movements, and an air of majesty, which made even tall men appear little when near him. His eyes, whose glance was so terrific when he was roused to anger, exercised an irresistible influence over the hearts of those on whom he looked kindly. Nothing could equal the magical expression of his mouth :—when he smiled, the fascination was irresistible ; and, when compressed by rage, it made the firmest nerves tremble. In those moments, every word to which he gave utterance fell like a thunderbolt. It was a mouth which could make powerful monarchs tremble, or confer happiness on thousands by a benignant smile.

But, to return to my scene in the Louvre. The stranger whom I have just been describing stood with one hand hanging carelessly at his side ; the other was raised, and the fingers were passed through the button-holes of his waistcoat of white wadded silk : the hands were remarkable for delicate whiteness and elegance of form. A green uniform coat with two silver epaulets, a small three cornered cocked hat, of a peculiar form, white kerseymere small-clothes, white silk stockings, shoes with gold buckles, the grand



cordon of the legion of honour, almost entirely concealing a sword in a white sheath with a hilt of mother-o'-pearl and silver :—such was the dress of His Imperial and Royal Majesty, Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, and King of Italy, etc. ; for he himself stood before me.

Napoleon frequently entered the apartments of the Museum by the inner door communicating with the Tuileries. There he would walk about by way of relaxation, after long and wearisome confinement in his cabinet. Whilst the Emperor was in the Museum, it was customary not to admit strangers, lest he should be annoyed by idle curiosity ; but, any persons who happened to be in the apartments before he entered, were suffered to remain. On the day to which I have alluded, he had taken it into his head to visit the lower part of the Museum, and my immoveability attracted his notice.

He had stood for a minute or two looking at me, and, finding that my contemplative reverie was likely to be of long duration, he advanced a few paces, and raising his hand so as to catch my eye, he said :

“ Do not forget, Sir, that Pygmalion fell in love with a statue.”

This apostrophe drew me from the intellectual to the material world ; and I hastily looked round at the person who had addressed



me. I immediately recognized the Emperor. Though I was not elated by any of the feelings which such a rencontre would probably have excited in the heart of an ambitious courtier ; yet, I was highly pleased at finding myself thus face to face with the great man, whom I had hitherto admired only at a distance. Uncertain whether the Emperor wished to be known or not, I contented myself with making a respectful obeisance and replied :

“ The error of the artist proves the power of the art.”

“ Are you a sculptor ?” inquired the Emperor.

“ No . . . . Sir.”

Napoleon smiled at my marked hesitation, which proved that I was aware whom I was addressing, and he said :

“ Are you a painter ?”

“ No.”

“ What are you, then ?” he continued with some degree of impatience.

“ I aspire to discharge those important functions, which afford a young man the opportunity of qualifying himself to serve his sovereign usefully.”

“ Perhaps you would like to be an auditor in the council of state ?”

“ That is the object of my ambition.”



I mentioned you, Prince, and you Count Fabre de l'Aude.

"Your name?" continued the Emperor.

I gave it.

"Where is your father?"

"I have lost him."

"Is he an emigrant?"

"No, he perished on the scaffold in 1794.

"Ah!....and you would wish to enter my service?"

"It is an honour of which I should be proud."

"You know me, then?"

I bowed profoundly, and crossed my arms, on my bosom in token of affection and devotedness.

"Ah! you know me, and yet you pretended you did not," said he. "Bravo! you must be a diplomatist."

"I am the subject of Your Imperial Majesty. It would ill have become me to raise the veil beneath which your Majesty thought fit to disguise yourself."

"Well! very well! Go on as you have begun, and you will find your path smooth in the career you have to pursue. Above all things, be humble."

"I will exert, in the service of Your Imperial Majesty, the same zeal with which my ancestors served the Kings your predecessors."

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—Did I ever tell you



that that same evening the Emperor asked me some questions respecting you? He repeated to me literally the words you have just now uttered. He was much pleased with them, and he made the remark, that people of quality were the best fitted for courts.

“ You might have reminded him, Prince,” said I, “ that in past revolutions, men of rank have always been the last to bow their heads to the conqueror. One only of all the members of the council of state, withheld his adherence from the act of deposition ; and that one was a nobleman. This should be borne in mind.”

RÉAL.—And how did your interview with the Emperor terminate?

After I had made the remark, which Prince Cambacérès has just adverted to, Napoleon smiled, and, with great kindness of tone and manner, said :

“ Lose the remembrance of this meeting, and I will not forget you.”

He kept his word. Having saluted me, he proceeded towards the *Salle des gardes* of Henry II. I remained rivetted to the spot, as if by enchantment. On the departure of the Emperor, all my self-possession seemed to have forsaken me ; and, but for an effort of physical strength, I should have been overcome by the excess of my joy.

The present generation, who see thrones filled



merely by men of the ordinary stamp, are perhaps unable to comprehend such a state of feeling. Providence has not granted to them the favour which must ever be our pride and glory; namely, to have been face to face with Napoleon, to have heard his voice vibrated through our ears and hearts, and to have gazed on his placid and majestic countenance. To us, Napoleon was not a mere King or Emperor; he was a being of a higher order; one of those sublime creations, that perhaps help to exalt our idea of the Creator. Napoleon was our father, our master, and, in some degree, our idol. We young men cherished for him the affection and duty of sons. There existed between him and ourselves a positive sympathy which made us regard as a sacred and family duty, that which the present generation of young Frenchmen would pronounce to be servility and base vassalage. It is certain that we believed the Emperor's government to be *the best of republics*; and yet what a downright despotism it was!

It was sometime before I could restore my feelings to their ordinary level, and regulate my mind so as to render myself superior to my good fortune; for to me it was a singularly good fortune to have been honoured by the notice of the Emperor, and to have acquired his special protection. I felt that thenceforward every



object would appear to me under a new aspect, that I should no longer stand alone in the world, or require those supports which, like fragile reeds, snap when implicitly trusted to. I should now no longer need the protection of strangers—that protection which was such a burthen to me.

No one who saw me enter the Museum that day, would have recognized me when I came out. My walk....my looks....all must have been changed. I felt as though I had been electrified by contact with the great man. I looked forward to the future with a pride and confidence which henceforth nothing could shake. Napoleon was our religion:—our faith in him was like our faith in Providence. With his aid, we felt that nothing could fail us, and we set at defiance all hostile influence. Our sovereign was not a mere signing machine; and who in all the world could have morally countersigned Napoleon?

In the midst of my joy, I did not forget the injunction of profound silence which I had received from the Emperor. I should have considered myself criminal had I revealed a syllable to any person whatever, and you, Monseigneur, must pardon me for the reserve I maintained even to *you*.

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—I commend you for it  
....Ah! young enthusiast! you have drawn



an accurate picture of the French youth at that time.

RÉAL. — And now it is affirmed that they were hostile to the Emperor.

Nothing can be more false than that assertion ! exclaimed I. The conscription, that frightful tyranny, as it has been termed, was painfully felt by parents ; but we . . . we gloried in our administrative embroidery, our magisterial fur, and our military epaulets ! Napoleon justly understood and estimated the youth of France ; he did not basely flatter us, but he opened to us the path of glory, in which he himself triumphantly led the way.



## CHAPTER II.

Cambacérès and Carnot at the Palais Royal on the 10th of August 1792—David the Painter—His disavowal of a phrase often attributed to him—Pretended list of the condemned—Alarm of the Jacobins—Théroigne de Méricourt—Unpublished details relating to the 10th of August—Count Roederer's visit to the Tuileries—A mysterious message—A Conversation with Marie-Antoinette—Louis XVI—Curious disclosures—Roederer's account of the events of the 10th of August—Cambacérès relates the circumstances which preceded the 18th Fructidor—Consultation between Cambacérès, Talleyrand, Barras, Madame de Stael and Benjamin Constant—Dialogue between Cambacérès and Barras—An interview with Barthélemy—The Prince de C....—Anecdotes—The Royalists' plot discovered—Carnot's account of his escape—Details not published in his Memoirs—Interview between Napoleon and David the Painter—The picture of the coronation—Discussion between Napoleon and Count Fabre de l'Aude respecting the restoration of titles and armorial bearings—The cock and the eagle—Napoleon suggests the re-establishment of monarchy—Curious details.

THE first time I dined with Prince Cambacérès, after the events of 1814, was at his



country seat, and the party consisted of six guests, myself included. There were present Count Fabre de l'Aude, Carnot, Baron Dubois-Dubay, Baron Denon, and Baron Louis David (the painter.) During dinner, the conversation was general, but, when we retired to the drawing-room, the party separated into several little groups. The Prince chatted with Carnot, and related to him how I had made his acquaintance. Cambacérès then said to the ex-director :

“ You and I did not see each other for a very long interval after the day when we met for the first time.”

Carnot inquired whether they did not first meet at a sitting of the Committee of public safety.

“ No,” replied the Prince, “ our acquaintance is of older date. I first saw you on the 10th of August, 1792. We supped that evening at the Palais-Royal.”

I know not why Carnot's memory should have been at fault on such a point ; but he never wished it to be understood that he had been on terms of familiarity with the Duke of Orleans.

“ At all events,” resumed the Prince, apparently a little piqued, “ our acquaintance was formed in very stormy times.”

“ Yes, it certainly was. First, during the trial of Capet, (here I looked at the ex-arch-



chancellor, who made a sort of grimace, which Carnot did not perceive, or did not choose to notice,) then, on the 10th May, or the 1st Prairial, on the 9th Thermidor, and on the 18th Fructidor. After the latter period, I lost sight of you."

"It was lucky for you that you got out of the way."

"Did you find yourself lucky in staying behind?"

"I proved my innocence. Those were sad times."

Count Rœderer was announced, and his entrance interrupted the colloquy. The salutations and introductions being ended, the Prince said, addressing himself to Count Rœderer:—

"I was just now relating to M. Carnot some circumstances connected with the 18th Fructidor, with which he is unacquainted; but perhaps, Count, it would be more interesting if you would relate what took place on the 10th of August, which possibly we may all have forgotten."

Rœderer, at first, did not seem much inclined to accede to this suggestion; but, being acquainted with us all, he at length consented, and, pointing to David, he said: "There is one who can set me right, if my memory should fail me."



“I assure you, replied the painter, that my memory is none of the best: besides, the fine arts are now the only subject to which I direct my attention.”

We all smiled at his scrupulous prudence, and Carnot, seating himself, turned towards David, and said :

*“Robespierre, I will drink the hemlock juice with you.”*

“Carnot,” said David, with some warmth, “you are repeating a calumny. My enemies thought proper to attribute that phrase to me, but I never uttered it. It is vexatious to think of the folly and wickedness that have been attributed to me. Ah! gentlemen, we were all more or less mad in 1798, and 1799.”

Every one seemed to acknowledge the truth of this remark. David again positively denied the apostrophe to Robespierre. I may likewise observe that, on several other occasions, in my presence, he has made the same disavowal. When the warmth of feeling, occasioned by this little incident, had somewhat subsided, Rœderer thus continued :

“For the space of a year, it had been a settled point that Royalty would henceforth be opposed to our interests. One of two things was inevitable; either Royalty must be overthrown, or, we must take to flight; for a re-action was



near at hand. There were a great number of us who had reason to fear the vengeance of the Court. I recollect that, sometime between the 15th and the 20th of July 1792, I was spending an evening at Mousseaux, when a list was produced, written, it was alleged, by the ex-minister of marine, Bertrand-Molleville, with notes in the hand of the Queen. This list contained three hundred names, classed in five divisions. To these divisions the following punishments, were allotted: 1st execution, 2nd the galleys, 3rd imprisonment for life, 4th exile for life, 5th banishment, or imprisonment, for a certain period; and to all was affixed the additional punishment of total confiscation of property. The Dukes of Orleans, de Biron and d'Aiguillon, and sixty members of the Constituent Assembly, were in the first class, together with Robespierre, Pétion, Lameth, and Marat. In the second division, which was equally well filled, I had the honour to be set down, with a long list of good company. The Duke de Liancourt was at the head of the third division, and Monsieur, the King's brother, at the head of the fourth. This horrible document bore every appearance of being genuine. Pétion declared he had received it from Madame Campan, which statement was false; but, at that time, any story obtained credit, especially any one which excited alarm. The



Duke of Orleans was dismayed—Sillery and Voidel were in utter despair. Barbaroux, who already fancied himself slaving at the galleys for life, in company with Vergniaud, asked us what we proposed to do. ‘For my part,’ he added, ‘my resolution is taken. The Marseillais are advancing. Whenever they appear, I shall put myself at their head, I shall repair to the Tuileries, make an end of the King and Queen, or perish in the attempt.’

“At these energetic words, terror seized even the boldest of the company. Pétion was as white as his own shirt, and Robespierre a little whiter. The Duke of Orleans signified his wish to return to England, and Robespierre and Marat aspired to accompany him. Danton, then raising his voice, exclaimed :

“ ‘I will murder the first coward who shall take to flight. The wine is drawn, and we have nothing to do but to drink it. There must be no demur. Let us follow Barbaroux, and turn the Tuileries inside out. This vigorous stroke will disarm the royalists. They will tremble and fly, and our triumph will be complete !’

“Laclos spoke in the same tone, but in better terms. All agreed as to the danger of hesitation. Pétion, on being questioned, declared his belief that the National Guard were partly royalists ;—that two or three battalions would doubt-



less declare themselves hostile to the King, if Mandat, their commander, could be sent out of the way.

“ ‘ Sent out of the way,’ exclaimed Danton ;  
‘ kill him,—the dead do not come back.’ ”

“ Several individuals present expressed their horror at the proposed mode of getting rid of poor Mandat ; upon which Danton observed :  
‘ It is better to devour the beast than to be devoured by him.’ No one made any reply to this remark. It was resolved that an attack should be made on the Tuileries, as soon as the Marseillais arrived in sufficient numbers to encourage the Parisians. It was never imagined that the King would surrender without an attempt at resistance ; the possibility of such a want of spirit was not for a moment contemplated. A certain individual, to whom the crown was promised, gave up all the money he possessed to pay the men of the 10th of August. He was fairly duped ; but he well deserved it. Our party at Mousseaux broke up, and we all went to apprise our friends of the proscription list which we had just seen.”

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—And by whom was that pretended list really drawn up ?

RÖDERER.—I afterwards learned that it was the work of a man named Duport, a notary, who lived near the church of Saint-Eustache. This



man, by using his left hand, could counterfeit any person's writing. He was much employed at the Palais-Royal in drawing up accounts. The list which I have just mentioned was perhaps his master-piece. Théroigne paid him, but of course not from her own purse.

I here interrupted Count Rœderer, to inquire what had become of the woman Théroigne.

RŒDERER.—She is dead.

DENON.—That is a mistake. She is now a lunatic and an inmate of the Salpêtrière.

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—I recollect a strange present which I received from M. Pinel. It was the original copy of some correspondence of that creature Théroigne with a female of her own stamp. It presents a curious picture of the profligacy of the time. Would you like to see it? added the Prince, addressing himself to me. Well, I will make you a present of it.... But let Count Rœderer proceed.

“This interruption,” observed I, “has afforded the Count an opportunity of adding a note to his narrative.”

PRINCE CAMBACÉRÈS.—Let the notes be given at the end of the story, and not at the foot of every page.

RŒDERER.—Théroigne, who was an absolute demon, was employed to assassinate Suleau, a worthy citizen, a man of talent and respecta-



bility, and a hearty royalist. Théroigne formed acquaintance with Danton, with the base Saint-Hurugues, with Maillard, Mehée, Sergent, Hébert, Roussin, Merlin de Thionville, Chabot, Manuel, Bourdon de l'Oise, Santerre, Bazire, Fabre d'Eglantine, Panis, and Chaumette. As to Robespierre, his alarm had induced him to quit the capital ; and, in spite of all that may have been said about Marat's movements, he was no where to be seen. Henriot had a heavy duty to perform on that occasion : he took charge of the Faubourg Saint-Victor ; Panis took Saint-Marceau ; and Santerre, Saint-Antoine.

Barbaroux headed his Marseillais : all their orders and pass words were issued by him. The police, without any regular authorization, distributed five thousand cartridges among the federates, who had been joined by about a thousand thieves and vagabonds ; for all were deemed good enough to fight in the holy cause. The end was supposed to justify the means. We could not pick and choose. August was to restore the old régime, or banish it for ever.

As to me, I knew not half the measures that were adopted, though I very well understood the danger, and I also knew the fate that awaited me, should the court party prove victorious. I was not very much at my ease. On the evening of the 8th, I went to the Tuileries. Every



one there was agitated by gloomy presentiments. The King seemed to have lost his senses ; for he was laughing immoderately. Madame Elizabeth was silent and dejected. The Queen was calm, proud and indignant ; she was the soul of the Royalist party. I know not what prompted me to mention the arrival of the Duke of Orleans, whose carriage I understood had been seen in the court-yard. The mere mention of his name called forth a general burst of hatred and indignation ; so violent, that I feared a terrible scene would ensue, and, to avoid it, I took my departure. The information, however, proved untrue—the Prince did not appear.

I was descending the grand stair-case when an ex-body-guard, (M. de Gaston if I recollect rightly) who was behind me, said in a low tone of voice : “ Sir, the King requests that you will follow me. He wishes to speak to you.” Taken by surprise by this mysterious message, I hesitated whether or not I should accept the royal invitation. A moment’s reflection made me ashamed of my apprehensions. M. Gaston looked at me, and I bowed in token of acquiescence. We crossed the vestibule, and entered the gallery on the left of the court-yard, which opens, in arcades, to the gardens. My guide went forward to speak to a sentinel, and then to a *valet de pied*, after which we ascended another



staircase, which brought us to an *entresol*. Here I was left alone for about ten minutes, which I should possibly have imagined to be the duration of an hour, had not the course of time been marked by a splendid clock which stood in the apartment.

I heard the rustling of a silk dress, and I rose from the arm chair in which I had seated myself. A lady entered: it was the Queen. I expected the King, and my surprise must have been marked in my countenance. The eagle eye of Marie-Antoinette perceived it, and she said:

“ You are surprised to see me, Monsieur de Roederer; you expected the King. He is engaged in an audience with M. Mandat, and cannot come to you just this moment. I feared you would be tired of waiting . . . . ”

I stammered out some formula about duty, the desire to prove my affection, etc. Another inquisitorial glance from Marie-Antoinette accompanied by a sigh, and she said:

“ Duty, affection, respect, even love, are words unsparingly addressed to us; and yet we can put no faith in them. Who is there now can say he loves the King ? ”

“ All France, Madam, I assure you. ”

“ All France, say you? Then, why is he left here desolate, without respect, without power ;



compelled to contest with the vile *canaille*, and exposed to every outrage? . . . . Ah ! Monsieur Rœderer . . . I ask again, who loves the King ? Would not they who love him give proof of their affection ? Would they not defend him, remove his enemies, and afford him the means of doing good ? The King is grateful. He would reward munificently and promptly any one who might render him an important service."

The Queen paused. She awaited my answer with visible anxiety. I saw the snare ; and I observed that if any coldness were manifested towards the King, it must be because he was supposed not to be sincerely attached to the constitution. Upon this, the Queen exclaimed in a tone of impatience :

" Mon Dieu, Monsieur ! With the exception of the King, who must regard it as his only safeguard, tell me who is attached to this fine constitution ? Certainly not the traitors who are plotting a republic. You are a man of sense, Monsieur Rœderer, and you cannot fail to perceive what they are aiming at. Why is this forging of pikes continued ? Why are a thousand banditti in reserve at the barrière ? And the Marseillais, who is leading them on ? Is it with the view of cementing the constitution that the national guards are excited against us, and our defenders disorganized ? What is meant,



I ask you, by these acts of hostility ? Against whom are they directed ? What would the people have ? and you Sir, what would you have ?”

These animated and pointed interrogatories, accompanied as they were by the Queen’s keen and searching looks, not a little embarrassed me. However, I felt the necessity of summoning all my presence of mind, and I replied :

“ I do assure you, Madam, that you are misled by exaggerated statements. I am aware that the police yesterday distributed ammunition ; but only to the national guards. As to the unrecognized parties to whom your Majesty alludes, I know not who or where they are. Perhaps they are confounded with the neighbouring federists, who have zealously offered themselves for the defence of Paris. The Marseillais will do the same . . . .”

Here I was interrupted by a gesture of contempt. The Queen’s eyes flashed anger, as she said :

“ Ah Sir ! I would rather think you blind than treacherous. You are either the one or the other—that is certain.”

“ Madam !”

“ Do you imagine you can gain any advantage by setting yourselves in hostility to us ? The situation of the King is not so desperate,



but that he can help himself. His adherents and his resources are immense. The feeling in the departments is favourable ; it will be wise in you to concur with it. We are all anxious for the happiness of the country."

" Why not say the happiness of the kingdom ? Is the republic proclaimed ?"

" Who has any thought of such a thing, Madam ?"

" The leaders of the pretended federists. Do they imagine Europe will endure such a volcano of agitation ?"

She stopped short, on hearing a heavy foot-step advancing towards the apartment.

" Here is the King, Sir ; I hope he may be more successful with you than I have been."

Without waiting for my reply, she rose and opened a door leading to another room. She then curtsied and closed the door after her, but not before I had caught a glance of Madame Elizabeth, who was in the adjoining apartment, and who had doubtless overheard every word that had passed between us. In a court, one must never count on absolute privacy.

The King appeared, and in the most courteous manner, apologized for having kept me waiting. In the course of my interview with him, he let fall some remarks which made but little impression on me at the moment, but which created in me a feeling of no little un-



easiness when I reflected upon them the following day. You must bear in mind, gentlemen, that the interview I am about to describe took place on the evening of the 8th of August. The King observed that M. Mandat had unexpectedly detained him and added :

“ The poor Commandant is very melancholy. He is assailed by gloomy forebodings. *He assures me that they seek his life.*”

I protested that such a thing could not possibly be thought of.

“ So I have assured him,” replied the King. “ But reasoning will not overcome fear. For my own part, I have more confidence in the people. They will not renew the horrors of 1789.”

“ I am convinced they will not, Sire.”

The King then questioned me about the departments, and the members of the commune. He asked me whether Bailly might not hope for a re-action of public opinion in his favour : and whether the national guards would do their duty in the event of an attack on the Tuileries. He urged me to give him my sincere opinion on this point. “ Certainly,” added he, “ I will never commence a civil war ; but, if they fire into my windows, there is a lawful defence which I may be permitted to maintain.”

“ But which would be very painful to a heart like yours,” said I.



Here Louis XVI took my hand, pressed it cordially in his, and said in a tone of deep emotion :

“ Ah, Monsieur ! I cannot sleep, so much am I tormented by the idea of being compelled to shed the blood of my people, who are my children. I would rather a thousand times, (should I be pushed to the extremity) shed my own blood, even to the last drop.”

When Rœderer repeated these words, all present gave utterance to a simultaneous expression of admiration ; and yet there were several regicides in the party. Rœderer was delighted at the impression he had produced, and, recollecting the remark made by the orator Cœschines to his pupils, when he was reading to them an oration of his antagonist Demosthenes, he very appropriately quoted it and said : *Ah ! if you had heard this uttered by his own lips !*

“ For my own part,” resumed Rœderer, “ the King’s words made so powerful an impression on me, that, in the impulse of the moment, I was about to throw myself at his feet and to reveal the plot that was hatching. But prudence interposed, and I reflected that as matters then stood I should only hurl myself to destruction without saving him. I confined myself to general remarks. The King, without much disguise, proposed that I should devote myself to his in-



terests ; and hinted that he had in his pay several members of the left side. I feigned not to understand him, and he, becoming weary of the interview, dismissed me."

Here Count Rœderer paused. Several of the party expressed themselves gratified by his interesting story. Even Cambacérès had not before heard it fully. Carnot and David said nothing : the former looked dissatisfied, and the latter was evidently ill at ease. All the rest of us were delighted, and we expressed so much gratification at what we had heard, that Rœderer was induced to proceed as follows :

"Mandat was, at heart, a royalist ; and yet, by some strange fatality, the King at first classed him among his enemies. In the presence of Count de Rochefort, M. de Guyon, the Duke de Brissac, and some other faithful friends of the royal family, the King remarked : ' In case of danger, Mandat will take part with me, because he will execute the law ; but he is in principle a republican.' Mandat, to whom some one repeated this observation, replied : "I see that I must sacrifice my life to convince the King of my real sentiments." He proceeded to Pétion, and informed him that an attack was meditated on the executive power. He spoke with so much energy, that the Mayor of Paris, after a long discussion, and being pressed to the utmost ex-



tremity, gave him a note couched in the following terms :

“ Sir,

“ The terms of the constitution are precise. If traitors should attack any constituted authority in the exercise of its functions, you must, under pain of forfeiture to the nation, defend that authority, in concurrence with the national guard. The King, as you may suppose, is not excepted from the duty which the law of the country imposes on you.

(Signed)

“ PÉTION.”

“ I saw this note in Mandat's hands. He shewed it me on the 9th of August. I read it over three times, and since then it has remained engraven in my memory. I may add, and it is a subject of deep remorse to me, that I was the indirect cause of the death of that unfortunate citizen. He had just parted from me, when Pétion came to me. My thoughts were wholly engrossed by the communication I had just perused ; and I congratulated the Mayor of Paris on the honourable letter he had addressed to Mandat. Pétion turned pale, bit his lips, and said : ‘ I have committed a fault.’ He said no more, but this was quite enough. On the



morning of the 10th, an imperative order of the commune summoned Mandat to the Hôtel de Ville. Here he was censured for the measures he had adopted against the people. He was broken, and sent to prison, under the guard of Rossignol. The latter caused him to be immediately assassinated, and, after his death, Pétion's letter was found upon him.

“ The whole of the 9th of August was actively employed by our friends. They stirred up insurrection in the faubourgs, and held themselves in readiness to march. The night of the 9th was terrific. Terror was universal. Many persons, finding it unsafe to sleep in their own houses, procured beds elsewhere. I was one of them. It is impossible to form any conception of the absolute listlessness of Louis XVI. Paris was illuminated almost in every part. The tocsin had ceased to sound. The streets were crowded by furious mobs, and few could pass through them with safety. Any one wearing a green coat was sure to be attacked : that was the signal of proscription. Cannon was drawn through the streets, and the multitude provided themselves with arms. At length, the word was given for the attack on the Tuileries — thither the assailants marched.

“ On the morning of the 10th, Pétion's prudence forsook him. Being summoned to the



Tuileries, he repaired thither, and, under some pretext or other, was detained as a hostage. He soon perceived his error and wrote a note to Vergniaud, acquainting him with his situation, and begging to be released with all possible speed. Vergniaud thought the best thing he could do was to cause the Legislative Assembly to issue a decree, summoning Pétion to the bar, where he would have to render an account of his conduct on the preceding evening. The messenger who was ordered to convey this summons, met him in the gardens of the Tuileries. Pétion welcomed him as his deliverer; there was no contending against the will of the legislature, and the mayor of Paris, being released from captivity, fled to his own house, in which the conspirators shut him up in order to save him from all responsibility in case of accident. This was a favour which he exacted from them.

“ Danton came to me early in the morning. He was half intoxicated and he said :—

“ ‘ We are going to have an explosion.’

“ Then take care you don’t get blown up in it,” observed I.

“ ‘ There is no danger of that. Everything is arranged, and we are sure of success. There are some who insist on the death of the King this day; but I do not think that necessary..



Indeed, it would perhaps be prejudicial to us. Those who sincerely want the Duke of Orleans, would of course be delighted to get Louis out of the way ; but I think that would only serve to retard matters, and I am not for striking at the life of the King: Will you take upon yourself, continued he, the task of intimidating him? Prevail on him to quit the Tuileries, and to come and seek refuge in the National Assembly. There we can surround him, and get rid of him quietly.'

" I must confess that I was not over eager to undertake this dangerous task ; but Danton fixed his fierce eyes on me ; and the colossus, seizing me by the throat, which he grasped almost to suffocation, said :—

" ' Mark, that in this tragedy each one has his part to play. Should any one, who is required to be an actor, shew himself disposed to remain a mere spectator, it will cost him his head. Do not hesitate, then, or you will have reason to repent it. I shall keep my eye upon you ; and you will be treated according to your deserts.'

" I cast down my eyes, and promised all he required. It was arranged that, as president of the department, I should proceed to the Tuileries, and do all I could to prevail on the King to leave the castle



“ The report of artillery was heard.

“ ‘ Hark !’ said Danton, ‘ the work has commenced. *Morbleu !* we will make them dance to a fine tune.’

“ He departed almost in a state of frenzy. I dressed myself, and proceeded to the office of the department. I was pensive and melancholy, and yet I could not help smiling at the groups of maniacs who every moment stopped me on my way through the streets. I had the pass-word, the card of recognition ; and those who happened not to know me personally suffered me to pass on when my interrogatory was ended.

“ I need not relate to you, gentlemen,” pursued Count Rœderer, “ the events of the 10th of August. I have published my justification ; I will, therefore, confine myself to some facts which I had exclusively the means of knowing. The King, in spite of all the Queen’s entreaties, could not be prevailed on to defend himself. He ought to have appeared in military uniform, with the white plume of Henry IV, booted, spurred and on horseback. But, instead of this, he made his appearance dressed in a violet coat, (the colour of mourning and of ill omen,) small-clothes, silk stockings, shoes with diamond buckles and a rapier by his side. His pale and haggard countenance was expressive only of



terror and irresolution. He inspected, with an air of indifference, the ranks of the national guard. Some ventured to address to him insulting remarks ; but all would blindly have obeyed his word of command, if he had had courage to give it. Barbaroux assured me, that if the King had only shewn himself, the citizens would have rallied round him, and the counter-revolution would have been accomplished.

“ Meanwhile, the decisive moment approached. Fouquier-Tinville, who was that day aid-de-camp to Danton, came, on the part of the latter, to desire me to repair to the Tuileries with my colleagues. We proceeded thither at half past eight o’clock. I was the first who entered the court-yard, where I successively addressed several battalions. Those of the Filles-Saint-Thomas, and the Petits-Pères, were for the King. I recommended them to act with caution. Do not be assailants, said I ; stand on the defensive. One of them replied :

“ ‘ We will do our duty · death to traitors !’

“ This language alarmed me. Accompanied by my colleagues, we waited on the King, who was surrounded by his family. He asked my advice. I observed that to maintain the conflict would be a fearful extremity ; and that it would be better for him to seek the protection of the National Assembly, who would quell the tumult,



“ ‘The King will do better,’ said Marie-Antoinette. ‘He will punish the factious; his lenity encourages them to outrage. Here, Monsieur, she added, presenting to him a pistol, take this, and God will aid you.’

“ The King looked at her with a piteous air.

“ A member of the department addressed some words to the Queen which I did not hear.

“ ‘Silence, Sir!’ she exclaimed, ‘you have no right to speak here. These disturbances would not have taken place, if you had done your duty. We do not want talkers: at this time, we want men who can act!’

“ I cannot attempt to describe, gentlemen, the effect which these words produced: all who heard them were electrified. *Mon Dieu!* how easily sovereigns may preserve their crowns! If they lose them, it must be by their own weakness. I then addressed myself to Marie-Antoinette, and asked her whether she would take upon herself the responsibility of what was about to ensue: the destruction of so many faithful servants of the King, and possibly even of the royal family. The Queen turned pale. The ministers consulted together, and it was determined that the King should go to the Assembly. Marie-Antoinette then said to me:—



“ ‘ You have prevailed, Monsieur Rœderer, and the King is lost.’

“ I have saved him, Madam.”

“ ‘ You have sacrificed him. Ah Sire !’ she added turning to the King, ‘ you promised me better than this.’

“ Tears and sobs prevented her from continuing. She asked for a glass of water, but she shook so violently that I thought the goblet would break between her teeth. We left the Tuileries, and proceeded to the place of our destination. The rest is known. I need not repeat it. But I may mention that, as we passed through the streets, I twice saved the life of Louis XVI. One of the assassins, from whose hands I forced a musket which he had presented at the King, said to me in a tone similar to that in which he would have addressed an accomplice—

“ ‘ But you know it has been agreed on !’

“ No ; no !” replied I, assuming an air of mystery ; not to-day. “ The plan is changed.”

Here Count Rœderer ended his recital. He had interspersed it with some very curious particulars, which, as they had not been published, I determined to note down among my memoranda. Carnot, turning to Prince Cambacérès, said :—

“ Now, Monsieur, the 18th Fructidor, if you please.”



CAMBACÉRÈS.—All was going on badly. I was distressed at the melancholy aspect of affairs. My correspondence with Bonaparte was actively kept up. I painted to him the distracted state of France, and he replied to me by these few words :—*It is not yet time*. On the one hand, there was the royalist conspiracy carried on unreservedly, headed by Pichegru and Villot, and boldly threatening to restore the old régime; whilst, on the other hand, the Old Mountain was in motion. Barras was in the middle, striving to maintain himself in his eminent position. He was negotiating with the Count de Lille (Louis XVIII) with General Hoche, with Bonaparte, and with the tail of Robespierre. You know that, at the time I allude to, the five Directors were Barras, Rewbell, La Réveillère-Lepeaux, you Monsieur Carnot, and Barthélemy. The three first were anxious, above all things, to keep their places. The Marquis de Barthélemy had a leaning to the King, and you, Monsieur Carnot, wanted the Republic. But the three whose schemes you thwarted were more anxious to get rid of a troublesome watcher than to humble themselves to a good citizen. Do you recollect your conversation with M. de la Rue?

“ Yes,” replied Carnot, and I have related it in my Memoirs.”

CAMBACÉRÈS.—But I can inform you that your interlocutor relates it in other terms, and



that your respective accounts do not agree.\*  
Be that as it may, it is certain that the Di-

\* The following is the account given of the conversation here alluded to, by the Chevalier de la Rue, in his publication entitled "The History of the 18th Fructidor."

"The danger was daily becoming more urgent and more apparent, and we thought that Carnot would at length perceive the advantages of his position and turn them to the advancement of his own glory and the salvation of France. One of our party, who had been engaged in private and confidential relations with Carnot, resolved to make one more effort. After proving to him that all the circumstances of the conspiracy were known to us, he endeavoured to convince him that the fate of the country was in his hands, and that no man ever had allotted to him a more important political part. He warmly urged him to seize the favourable opportunity of rendering to his country the greatest service that could be conferred on her."

"The picture you have drawn," replied Carnot, "is very seducing : but I can see royalists behind the curtain ; and I will never consent to rally round their banner."

"What an opinion you entertain of us !" observed the Deputy. "Woe to those who should meditate, at this moment, the restoration of royalty ! Our sole object is to give you colleagues as capable of governing France, as they are anxious to ensure her happiness. Doubtless, there are deputies who think that the executive authority would be better placed in the hands of a single ruler, than divided among five who are incessantly at variance. You yourselves afford a proof of this truth, since you are animated by hatred and jealousy of each other. You, Citizen, who are an able politician, and who have meditated profoundly on all the various forms of government, must of necessity share this opinion. But such a change



rectory was split into two opposing parties, and that three of its members were endeavouring

can only be the fruit of experience; it must be effected without violence, without commotion, and it must be the result of experience and of the national will."

"Now, we have come to the point," said Carnot. "You would have the Republic resolve itself into a monarchy, and the monarchy to restore the Bourbons. Now, these changes I will exert all my efforts to prevent."

"Your imagination, Citizen Director, hurries forward events with vast rapidity. It appears to me that we are very far from a monarchy, and still further from a recall of the Bourbons. But, supposing both these changes should ensue, and that our political vicissitudes should terminate like those of England, what conclusion is to be drawn? surely this.... that your most powerful interest counsels that course which glory and the love of your country imperatively command. I know the cause of your dislike of the Bourbons...but is there any more certain means of effacing your political errors—any more noble justification? Who will doubt that your errors are attributable to circumstances, and not to your own heart? What prince would bear in mind the mistakes of the man who should open to him the way to his throne? And, finally, supposing we should one day or other return to the monarchy, would it not be desirable for the happiness and tranquillity of France, to restore princes before whom ambition and pretension dare not raise their heads? If, on the contrary, the army were to dispose of the crown, as it threatens to do, might we not justly fear the fate of Macedonia, which the Generals of Alexander, after his death, parcelled out among themselves? Or, might we not share the fate of the Romans, when the empire was to be won by the intrigues of commanders of legions, most of whom ascended the throne by the aid of revolution and crime? Do you imagine that an usurper would shew



to expel the other two. Amidst this conflict, it was not a little dangerous to maintain a

more tenderness than a legitimate sovereign to the destroyers of kings? Being necessarily more suspicious, he would probably be far less indulgent than a Bourbon, whose position, as well as the characteristic goodness of the family, would urge to pardon the past."

"Your argument," replied Carnot, "however specious, will never convince me of that indulgence. Even if I carried in my pocket a pardon, cemented by the royal promise, I should place no faith in it. . . On the day after his elevation to the throne, the King would perhaps be obliged to revoke it."

"I should sincerely pity you, citizen, for being a prey to such alarms, but that we are merely arguing on a chimera! However, to return to the object of my mission to you. You must perceive that we are hurrying towards anarchy or to military despotism, which is the most cruel of all tyrannies. This is the danger from which we must endeavour to escape, and to you, citizen, fate has reserved the honorable task of preserving France from these new scourges. Let me recommend you, then, cordially to unite with your colleague Barthélemy. Employ against the conspirators the arms with which the constitution provides you. Pursue earnestly with us, the course marked out for you, and the country, which you say you love, will be indebted to you for her salvation."

"I have already explained my sentiments on this point," said the inexorable Carnot; "I will never become the accuser of my colleagues. Besides, I do not perceive any of the dangers at which you are so much alarmed; though if they existed, I should from my position have the best opportunity of seeing them. I think, on the contrary, that there are among you imprudent or designing men who conjure up these phantoms of conspiracy, with the view of casting odium on the patriots, and



neutral position. I was not without inquietude. One evening, my humble abode was honoured by four visitors . . . Parbleu ! gentlemen, who do you think they were ? But, you would name a thousand persons, before you guessed right. On the door being opened, I beheld, to my utter surprise, the Director Barras in person, M. de Talleyrand Périgord, the Baroness de Staël, and the Baron Constant de Rebecque !

I fancied I was labouring under some delusion of vision, and I began to rub my eyes. Barras, observing my surprise, said :—

“ You did not expect us ? ”

“ M. Cambacérès,” said Madame de Staël, “ I know you are a prudent counsellor ; therefore, I have advised these gentlemen to come and hold a little conversation with you.”

I requested my visitors to be seated. I fastened the door, and drew the curtains, and, being installed in perfect privacy, I inquired to what subject the proposed consultation was to refer. At that time, M. Constant was a Swiss, very anxious to become a Frenchman. He was dying of the mania of being thought somebody ; not having sufficient good sense to be satisfied with being a man of the world and a man of driving you into some error, of which the royalists will not fail to take advantage. Subdue your alarms, be more confident, and all will be well.”



talent. He lent his pen to any one who promised him the reward of a place ; and he who now leans to liberal monarchical ideas, was at that time singularly infected with republican despotism. He undertook to explain the object of our interview, and made a long speech composed of obscure, long-winded sentences, which no doubt he thought very eloquent. Madame de Staël every now and then prompted him both in words and ideas ; so that the oration was altogether not a little amusing. Barras, seeing me smile, grew impatient to make an end of M. Constant's speech, which he very unceremoniously interrupted by saying :—

“ At first, I did not wish to see you in the Directory ; not from any objection to yourself, but on account of my engagements. Now, I should see you there with pleasure on one condition, which is, that you assure to us the co-operation of Bonaparte.”

“ For what object ?” inquired I.

They all looked at each other. The moment had arrived when it was necessary to be candid ; and, after a sign interchanged between the Ex-Bishop of Autun and the Baroness, Barras thus continued :—

“ We are between two gulfs : the old régime on the right, and terrorism on the left.



By dint of leaning first to one side and then to the other, we shall lose our equilibrium. We must endeavour to stand firm and not fall; but it would be well to close up the gulfs which are yawning on either side. This we might do by pursuing our course in the path opened by the present constitution (that of the year III and not of 1793); but, to do so, we must have the aid of a sword."

"Do you want Hoche, Moreau, Bernadotte, or Augereau?" inquired I.

Objections were urged against them all. Augereau was declared to be useful only for a *coup-de-main*. He was said to be an arm and not a head. "There is only one," said Barras, "only one who by sincerely uniting with us could lend us ample support. Henceforth, in all measures that may be contemplated, that General must be placed in the foremost rank. He has already been applied to through Ozun :\*

\* Marie Joseph Ozun, was a native of Sarrancolin in the department of the Pyrenees, and was descended from an ancient family in that part of the country. He was a man of talent and of agreeable person and manners. On his arrival in Paris, he commenced his official career in the office of the National Treasury. He became a member of the Council of Five-Hundred in 1795, and was made a tribune after the 18th Fructidor. He was subsequently created Prefect of l'Ain, and he died shortly afterwards in consequence of a fall from his horse. At the time of his death, the First Consul, who was his inti-



upwards of two hundred persons have written to him, and I wish you to procure his final answer."

"What if he should demand a share of the cake?"

BARRAS.—How?

"A place in the Directory."

TALLEYRAND.—He is not of the age.

"Oh! He is an exception. Nobody would dispute the point with him."

They all laughed, and I joined them. Madame de Staël now thought it was her turn to speak. Her silence had hitherto been a manifest effort of self-denial.

"I have suggested," said she, "that the Director shall intrust me with the negotiation. A woman is a person of no importance. Is it not so, gentlemen?" (We made many gallant protestations to the contrary) I can go to Italy: of all journeys that is the least likely to awaken curiosity. I will see the hero; I will paint to him a picture of his future glory. If he has a spark of patriotism in his soul, I will fan it into a flame. I will be his prophetess, his sybil, the

mate friend was about to give him the appointment of Prefet du Palais. From his entrance to the council of Five-Hundred to the time of his death, he actively espoused the interests of Napoleon. He has left behind him some very curious memoirs extending from 1784 to 1803.



Egeria of a victorious Numa. This will ensure success, whilst, if you employ ordinary negotiators, they will merely resort to cold commonplace arguments. Bonaparte will grow weary, and matters will never arrive at a close. What is your opinion, Monsieur de Cambacérès ?”

I was by no means anxious to mediate between Barras and Bonaparte ; and I, therefore, eagerly seconded the proposition of the enthusiastic daughter of Necker. “ Gentlemen,” said I, “ Madame de Staël is a man in politics, and the Graces cannot fail to negotiate advantageously with heroes.”

I perceived that neither Barras nor M. de Talleyrand shared my opinion. The former observed :—

“ I fear that the General, of whose stoicism I have witnessed examples, will not be very well pleased to see affairs during the Republic conducted as they would have been in the reign of Louis XV.”

TALLEYRAND.—The Gentleman (Bonaparte) is very positive, and but little given to gallantry. So far from consenting to listen to Minerva, he would, I verily believe, shrink from the zone of Venus.

Though the pill was well gilded, yet nevertheless Madame de Staël shewed herself piqued. However, some remarks which were made,



soothed her dissatisfaction, and the party took leave of me, with a very absurd recommendation of secrecy.

Three hours afterwards, I repaired to the Luxembourg: I desired Barras' valet-de-chambre to inform his master that I was awaiting his commands. Barras desired that I should be shewn in, and, as soon as he saw me, said:—

“What do you think of that mad project? Do not imagine that I had any share in it. The whole merit belongs to those two sages whose heads Sappho has turned. They will see their absurdity by and bye. However, she has talent enough for the whole forty of a French Academy.”

“Do you wish them to add another act to the Revolution?” I inquired.

“We must. The French are a strange people; agitation is their element, and they cannot be kept tranquil. Such is their taste for violent emotions, that repose is painful to them. When they complain of inertness, they mean to say:—*We rise and go to bed to-day, just as we did yesterday and the day before: this is too wearisome. Release us from this insipid state of existence!*”

“It is too true,” I observed.

“Well, then! we must serve our master in his own way. These Councils are plotting my destruction, with that of La Réveillère and Rew-



bell. They are leagued with Carnot and Barthélemy. You seem to doubt this. I know it to be the fact. The ferocious Carnot (I repeat the epithet which was used," said Prince Cambacérès, "without vouching for its appropriateness. Carnot bowed, and we all laughed).... The Republican Carnot wishes to be a *Marquis*, and to fill a place at court..I tell you again it is so..Do you know so little of mankind? Carnot hates us and will do anything for the pleasure of revenge. We must keep watch on him, and anticipate his designs. If you are not for us, your name will be inscribed as against us; and then, God help you! If you will let good sense guide you, you will have a decisive answer from Bonaparte. In the first place, he must transmit funds. The Treasury is drained. There is not enough in it to pay for a man's supper :

Voilà, belle Emilie, à quel point nous en sommes.

This droll application of the above line of Corneille, made me laugh, though the subject of our conversation was melancholy enough. I shook my head and said :—

“ Hoche will not agree to this.”

“ Never mind him.”

“ He will be compromised.”

“ That is his own fault.”



“ And if he should speak ?”

“ We must close his mouth.”

“ How are you to impose silence on a man in his position ?”

“ There is a way to do so. . . .and an infallible one.”

The tone in which this was said made me shudder. I replied :—

“ I know there is. But I need not trouble myself about what does not concern me. I will write to Bonaparte.”

“ Go and see him !”

“ Stop !” said I, “ this is not child’s play. My mission would excite attention. Would Bonaparte be pleased with it ? If he could be brought to a favourable decision, I would go. . . .*If not, not—*”

“ Oh !” exclaimed Barras, laughing, “ this is the Cortes of Arragon over again ! But, seriously, one cannot treat *this gentleman* so cavalierly as one would another. . . . You are one of those who threw him in my way in Vendémiaire.”

“ Have you any reason to regret it ?”

“ I do not mean to say I have. . . . But he is worse than a bar of iron ; one can break that if one cannot bend it ; but he is neither to be broken nor bent. These obstinate spirits are always more troublesome than useful. . . . And then you turn round upon me and say, *tu l’as*



*voulu, Georges Dandin ! . . . .* Well ! I confess I did admire him ; but then I knew nothing of him beyond his courage and military talent. Who would have imagined, in these times, that an officer would think about anything but pay and promotion ? His correspondence is quite unique ! . . . . It is like Frederick II writing to his Council of State ! . . . . What extended views ! . . . . What lofty feelings of honour ! . . . . What foresight ! If we ever suffer him to get a firm footing in Paris, there will be but one dwelling for him, and that is the Tuileries ; . . . . and he will doff his military cap for the crown of France."

I listened with deep interest to these observations. Barras formed a just estimate of Bonaparte ; but yet I was not without apprehension that his fears might suggest that *certain way* of getting rid of him, which he had obscurely hinted to me in reference to Hoche. I, therefore, thought it expedient to subdue the bright colouring of the portrait he had traced of Bonaparte, to whom, nevertheless, I fully conceded other qualities besides those of an able general.

" I am quite sensible," added I, " of the importance of securing his concurrence. I will write to him. I will see Lavalette. But will he not be dissatisfied with the confidence you have reposed in Augereau ?"



Barras then told me that Augereau had been allotted a part in the movement only because he had been expressly designated by Bonaparte, who, knowing him to be incapable of governing, did not regard him with that jealousy which Hoche, Joubert, Championnet, Moreau and Bernadotte naturally inspired. "Indeed," continued Barras, "Bernadotte is as good as Bonaparte; he has as much talent. I have sounded him, and his answer was, that he regarded Carnot as the most excellent of men, and would never consent to aid in his destruction." But for this answer, I should not have troubled my head about Bonaparte. Bernadotte might always be opposed to him with advantage.

About this time, M. Lavalette, an aid-de-camp of the Conqueror of Italy, arrived in Paris, and soon became very intimate with the Beauharnais family. This young man was exceedingly vain of being the bearer of communications from Bonaparte, and he made quite a stir in Paris. To hear him, one would have supposed that he had been sent on some secret mission to the government. I advised him to be more circumspect; but he was young, vain of his position, and anxious to be thought a person of great importance. Lavalette was, moreover, a most incorrigible gossip; he was shrewd and adroit, and very adequate to sustain



his part of Patrocles during the absence of Achilles.

From certain facts that came to my knowledge, I was warranted in concluding that the three Directors, who constituted the majority, were less averse to the royalists than to Carnot, whose inflexible integrity cut them off from all hope. His lofty disinterestedness was a severe censure on their corrupt proceedings. So much the worse did it prove for him who is now present, and who hears me tell this, added Cambacérès smiling.

As the Prince uttered these last words, I fixed my eyes on Carnot, and I observed that he reddened and looked embarrassed by the compliment pronounced on him. Why did that noble-minded man think it necessary to consent to the unjust and tragical death of the best of Kings? The Prince proceeded :

“ Barras left me, and shortly afterwards I saw Ozun, who informed me of Bonaparte’s hesitation. Baron Rebecque also called. He came to complain, in the name of Madame de Staël, that I had forsaken her. I immediately went to see her, and she poured forth a torrent of complaints against every one. The Directory did not choose to adopt her plans ; M. de Talleyrand insisted on having his own way ; and Bonaparte would not admit the fitness of



a woman to meddle with affairs which demanded the exercise of masculine energy. I took my leave of her. All things considered, I had good reason to congratulate myself that I was not included in the number of the proscribed of the 18th Fructidor.

“Meanwhile, Generals Pichegru and Villot were not slumbering. They were not seconded by their weak and timid colleagues, who were always prating about the letter of the constitution, and who had none of the prompt energy requisite for defeating intrigues. I knew all that was going on; I saw the tardy movements of the royalists. I could not, at the last moment refrain, as prudence would have dictated, from warning the director—Barthélemy—of the danger which threatened him. Chance threw him in my way, for, as I was crossing the Tuileries, I almost stumbled against him. ‘Good morning,’ said he, ‘how do you do?’ and was proceeding on his way, but I detained him.

“Mon Dieu!” said I, “honest men are unfortunate in these times!”

“‘They are, indeed,’ replied he.

“May it not be, I resumed, owing to their own blindness? They will not see the wicked plots that are brewing around them. For example, I would lay a wager that you go to bed every night in the confident hope of rising in the morning.



“ He looked at me with an air of composure, and said, ‘ What do you mean ?’

“ Citizen, I advise you to look to your own personal safety. Danger is at hand.”

“ ‘ What have you heard ?’

“ Nothing at all. . . . But I know enough to make me pity you. I have no wish to concern myself with your business, but, were I in your place, I would adjourn all those plans of reform, (which ultimately will be accomplished without effort) and I would seek Barras and Rewbell. Assure them of your determination to unite cordially with them,—tell them that you see the mischief in which the royalists would enthrall you, and that you are resolved not to share the ruin into which they would drag you.

“ ‘ I thank you, citizen, but I cannot possibly follow your advice. The three members of the majority are wretches whom I despise. I would rather incur the chance of falling, than league myself with them.’

“ But your fall is certain and near at hand.”

“ ‘ *Impavidum ferient ruinæ . . . .*’

“ That is sublime in Horace ; but in Paris in the 18th century, it is the maxim. . . . I paused.

“ ‘ Go on,’ said Barthélemy.

“ Well, then, it is the maxim of one who is willing to be duped.”

“ ‘ Ah Sir !’ replied the director, ‘ you cannot



conceive the disgust—the contempt with which I regard those odious intrigues which disgrace my colleagues. I know that they are plotting and conspiring. If they seek my life, let them take it; but they shall never have my acquiescence in their designs.’

“To-morrow, said I, your life may perhaps be the forfeit of your honesty.”

“‘To-morrow, that is very short notice! . . . . Then, if there is to be no longer respite, I must consider my doom as sealed. To escape is impossible. . . . God’s will be done!’

“With these words, he departed, leaving me in a state of feeling which I cannot attempt to describe.

“He had not given me time to inform him that the Prince de C——, an offshoot of the old régime, having been informed of the conspiracy by his father, the principal minister of Louis XVIII, was about to sell his information to the Directory. This wretch intended, on the following night, to crown by a horrible act of treason, the many crimes of his life. Who has not heard of the notorious Prince de C——?”

“I have seen him several times,” observed M. Vivant-Denon. “On one occasion, I was standing at the lower end of the Rue Richelieu, conversing with Count de Roche—d’Al——



when we saw a hired cabriolet driving towards us with great speed. The horse, dashing his foot into the gutter, covered my interlocuter with mud, upon which a voice from the inside of the vehicle, which we immediately recognized as that of Prince C—— called out :

“ ‘ Ah, my dear Monsieur de Roche.... I am very sorry for having splashed you. You are covered with mud. Now, any wag passing by, might say that you wear the insignia of the order of the mire, of which they have made me grand master.’

“ Well,” we exclaimed, “ if you do not embellish the story he certainly designated himself very correctly.”

“ I assure you it is literally true,” pursued M. Vivant-Denon. “ On another occasion, I was entering the Tuileries. I heard some one call me by my name, and, looking round, who should I behold but the Prince de C——. He was fashionably dressed, and looking uncommonly well, for he was a handsome fellow. He was walking, not with a *grisette* or a female of the lower class, but with a common street-walker. I looked at him with amazement, and he smiled at my surprise.

“ ‘ My dear fellow,’ said he, ‘ this lady is thirsty and I wish to procure her a glass of beer. Can you lend me a crown ?’ .... Anger



and impatience quite overcame me. I could not trust myself to give him an answer ; so I walked off and left him."

"And this fine gentleman," said Prince Cambacérès, "presumed on the sixteenth or seventeenth Fructidor to write a letter to Barras of which I happen to possess a copy."

The Prince opened a closet, and, after turning over some papers, took out a letter which he read to us, and which he afterwards permitted me to transcribe into my memorandum-book, where I now find it. It is in the following terms :—

"Citizen Director,

"My position is not calculated to inspire you with confidence. I am an emigrant, not yet finally erased, and a son of the minister of the individual who styles himself Louis XVIII, and King of France. My father, whose services and integrity have been called in question by that individual, is in complete disgrace. I have his cause to avenge, and I wish to save the Republic. Will you hear me ? But it must be immediately ; for there is no time to be lost. The delay of a single hour may be fatal. I am so confident of the importance of the disclosures which I am about to make that I



am willing you should detain me as a hostage until you satisfy yourself of my sincerity, and of the accuracy of the documents which I have to lay before you. I am in the Rue Vaugirard, under the portico of the Odéon, awaiting your answer. Reflect well ; for the existence of the present order of things depends on your attention to this.

“ (Signed) C ——— ”

“ Barras, roused by this missive, assembled Rewbell and La Réveillère, together with Sottin and Merlin de Douai. Sottin was minister of the Police, and Merlin de Douai was minister of Justice. It was determined that Barras and Sottin should that night have an interview with the informer. They accordingly sent for Prince C ——— who, for the promise of a handsome sum, revealed the whole plot of the royalists, and with a degree of circumstantiality which left no doubt of the truth of his statement. It was soon ascertained how to defeat the conspiracy, and where to seize the conspirators. The *coup d'état* was hurried on, and it was accomplished on the night of the 17th Fructidor. The succeeding events are known to you. M. Carnot can inform us how he escaped.”

“The narrative is in my Memoirs,” observed



Carnot. “However, I may relate some particulars which I deemed it necessary to withhold at the time I published my Memoirs, but which I have now no reason to keep secret. I was in fear both of the royalists and the jacobins; consequently, I turned a deaf ear to the multiplied representations of the members of the right in both councils. My fear was the return of the Bourbons. Could I have imagined that they, being restored, would leave me unmolested, whilst the jacobins, when in the possession of power, employed it to persecute me? The world seems to be turned upside down. Early on the morning of the 17th Fructidor, at a sort of public audience, to which I allowed any one to be admitted who wore a uniform, I observed a young officer about twenty years of age, making his way through the crowd. He advanced to me and presented his hand, which I took. He then made certain signs of the higher orders of free-masonry, denoting that I ought to treat him with more respect than that which was merely due to his uniform of sub-lieutenant. He led me to the recess of one of the windows, and there, after cautiously looking round him, he thus addressed me:—

“ ‘Citizen director, the Republic is betrayed by Barras. I know the fact. The villain has



sold us to his vices. Shall we endure this? Brutus did not hesitate to immolate his sons for the salvation of Rome. Shall we shrink from the sacrifice of a tyrant? I am resolved to rid the Republic of such a traitor. If you will only authorize me to attempt a *coup d'état*, he shall speedily be no more.'

"To this intemperate address, I coolly replied, that the law alone possessed the right of shedding the blood of the criminal. You, I added, render yourself criminal by this avowed wish to anticipate the law.

"The officer, whose name I did not ascertain, did not shew himself inclined to yield to my remonstrance. He alleged that Barras was in treaty with the Bourbons, that he knew the fact on the best authority, and that at least it was necessary to thwart his schemes.

"I employed every argument to convince the young man of the atrocity of the proposition he had suggested. I thought I had succeeded, and congratulated myself on my victory. The officer left me. But, in a little time afterwards, he came again. He was ushered into the drawing-room, where he wrote a note in pencil, which he requested a servant to deliver to me. I desired that he might be shewn into my closet, and as soon as he beheld me he exclaimed :

" ' Well, citizen, you would not believe me.



Every thing is arranged, and the troops have received orders to enter the constitutional circle. Hoche is now nothing. The command is transferred to Augereau, who has orders to arrest you. But this plot may yet be defeated. Barras must die, and then the party, bereft of its leader, will disperse like smoke. Give me your sanction, and you will speedily see the scene change.'

"As he spoke, I looked at him with a feeling of pity, and, when he had ended, I said: Citizen, in the conversation which I had with you just now, I regarded you as a man whose mind was disturbed by unfounded alarm; now, however, I must consider you a maniac. The plan you propose would render me odious in the eyes of all Europe. If you have reason to believe that one or more members of the Directory are guilty of treason, accuse them openly, face to face, and not behind their backs. Denounce them to the councils who will investigate any charges against them.

"I was still closetted with this fanatic, when my colleague, Barthélemy, was announced, and, at the same moment, one of my secretaries delivered to me a billet containing the following lines without any signature:—

" 'Carnot, have a care of yourself. Your destruction is resolved on. When the light of day



shall be succeeded by the shades of night, the work of your enemies will commence. A gun fired at one o'clock in the morning, is to be the signal for bloodshed. Assassins will enter your chamber ; you will be murdered, and a new revolution will begin.'

" This note, which as you may perceive was written in a strange affected style, amazed me. Every thing seemed to come upon me at once. I desired the young officer, whose name I never learned, not to attempt anything without acquainting me, and to call on me on the morning of the 18th. He shook his head, and said in a desponding tone : ' To-morrow, it will be too late ! ' He left me. Barthélemy seated himself, and thus addressed me :

" ' I have just had a visit from Barras. He affirms that the minority of the Directory is contending against the majority, and that you and I are lost ;—that our alliance excites displeasure. He told me, moreover, that the regard they entertain for me makes them anxious to save me, and that, to enable them to do so, it is requisite I should resign this very day. By offering your resignation,' added he, ' you will prove your innocence, and shield yourself from the impending storm.' My answer was such as ought to have been given by a man who would regard as dishonourable a resignation imposed



by circumstances. I said, moreover, that my colleagues might scrutinize my public life, and that they would find in it nothing reprehensible. Barras persisted in urging me to resign, which I firmly refused to do. He departed, giving me to understand that I should be allowed one or two weeks for reflexion. 'I have lost no time in coming to tell you this,' added Barthélemy, 'that you may be made aware of the perilous situation in which we both stand.'

"My dear colleague, replied I, as soon as he had ended, I have just received communications from people more candid than Barras, and from what they tell me, the danger which threatens us is much more imminent. Here, read this note which has just been delivered to me.

"I handed him the epistle, which he read a second and a third time.

"Surely, said I, you wish to learn it by heart.... Well! tell me what you think of it!

" 'Heavens!' exclaimed Barthélemy, in a piteous tone of voice, 'what will become of us? .... To-morrow night, the blow is to be struck!'

"I assured him that I saw no ground for alarm; and I deeply reproach myself for the implicit confidence I reposed in the inviolability of the constitution. The Triumvirs, said I, (meaning the three Directors,) are as ill at ease as



we are. All these mysterious communications are only intended to work on our credulity.... These worthies will think twice before they sever the sacred compact which binds us all together. Barras is a rogue, but you and myself are honest men. All he wants is to scare us away, so that we may leave the field open to his manikins. Let us stand firm, keep ourselves clear of the royalists, and we may brave our enemies.

“ I was mistrustful of my colleague. I knew that he was in some way involved in the plans of Pichegru, and I had doubts of his sincerity, though those doubts were unfounded. I, however, succeeded in inspiring him with courage; and, it being the time appointed for the general council of the Directory, we both proceeded thither. Our three opponents held themselves in reserve: not an angry word was uttered, and they heard us speak, if not with pleasure, at least with patience. The countenance of La Réveillère would have enabled me to guess that something extraordinary was in agitation: there was a sort of convulsive movement in his ferocious features, which a shrewd observer might have construed into the triumph of the traitor exulting over his fallen victims.

“ The sitting rose, and we separated. About sunset, a multitude of low characters, such as



the officers of the army of Fleuriot, loungers at billiard tables and gambling houses, and here and there a few military officers, who were really imposed on, were collected in groups in the garden of the Luxembourg. No one was permitted to go out. I myself saw this raw Prætorian guard, worthy of its leaders ; and I began to recover from my blindness. About eleven o'clock, a female, Mme. de Les.... who was intimate with Chenier, brought me a letter from La Réveillière. It was addressed to *Monsieur* Chenier, and was in these terms :

“ ‘ *Hold yourself in readiness to lend us your assistance to-night, which is the time appointed for the decisive stroke. If our friends second us, all will go well.*’

“ Allent, my secretary, was with me at the moment when the veil was drawn from my eyes. My consternation gave him the first hint of what had occurred. At that moment, a loud knocking was heard at my door. It was General Cherin, who, knowing nothing of the plot, came to inform me that a crowd of suspicious persons were collected in the Luxembourg. He asked me for orders, for he had not been let into the secret. I informed him that, as I was no longer President, (my time had expired,) he must address himself to La Réveillière. He had been in quest of the latter, who had



fled in alarm from the Luxembourg, and had taken refuge in the house of one of his friends ; but, at the moment, only his disappearance, and not his place of retreat, was ascertained. I saw that it was no time for hesitation, and, though divested of power, I directed the commandant to clear the Luxembourg. The mob, who had assembled there, immediately obeyed the order, though its legality was very questionable, and adjourned to another place of rendez-vous, where they were again routed after one in the morning.

“ General Cherin had scarcely left me when Barthélemy arrived. He had been sitting quietly at his game of tric-trac, when some one came to announce to him the movements of the hirelings of Barras. He asked what was to be done.

“ Escape, replied I, or you will be murdered. Those scoundrels will never forgive you.

“ He was standing in my apartment confounded, and not knowing what course to take, when an aid-de-camp of Augereau entered. He had come, he said, merely to call on me.

“ Citizen, said I, be more frank : say that you have come to reconnoitre me.

“ He stammered and looked confused, and I dismissed him with the indignation he merited. As soon as he was gone, Barthélemy returned to the charge, and implored me to advise him.



“ We have not even time to act, said I ; how can we have time to talk ?

“ Barthélemy departed,

Victime obéissante,

Tendre au fer de Colchas une tête innocente.

“ For my part, I retired to rest, without undressing. I lay down, not in my usual bed, but in one which was concealed behind a panel in my dining-room. There I remained for a little time, and then, arming myself with every precaution, I went out by a secret door, leading into one of the private gardens surrounding the Luxembourg. I carried with me two pistols. At that moment, the alarm guns were firing. I wandered about the streets for three hours, exposed to no little danger, before I could venture to enter the place of refuge which was prepared for me and where I was anxiously expected. Having slipped in, I found myself in safety, and then, *bon soir* to my enemies.

“ On the signal being given from the battery of the Pont-Neuf, Barras immediately summoned General Cherin, who had received the supreme command of our guard. He gave him secret orders to seize my person, dead or alive ; to break open my doors to get at me. Cherin hurried off to fulfil his mission, and, in proof of his zeal, resolved to employ a petard, if I did



not surrender at the first summons. Allent, hearing a noise at my door, went to ascertain what it was; a party of soldiers rushed upon him, and, holding their bayonets to his throat, obliged him to shew them my place of concealment. He conducted them to the secret bed behind the panel. *They found it warm*, as they said in their report; but the object of their search was gone.

“Allent smiled *in petto* at the disconsolate air of Cherin, who expected to be charged with want of zeal. He was not mistaken, for he was dismissed a few days afterwards. Rewbell, unable to controul his rage and disappointment, shook his clenched fist in Cherin’s face, and Cherin took the affront quietly, for fear of worse.

“Barras was more successful. He had himself undertaken the honourable mission of arresting Barthélemy. He seized him in bed. Barthélemy, raising his eyes to Heaven, exclaimed: *O ma patrie!* Like a lamb dragged to the slaughter, he was taken to the Temple, and from thence transported to Sinamary.

“The infamous triumvirate used their victory, as you know, with unparalleled barbarity. I can never pardon the style of their first proclamation. It ran thus:

“ ‘Citizens, a vast number of emigrants, consisting of the assassins of Lyons and the brigands



of La Vendée, drawn hither by royalist intrigues, and the tender interest which has been fearlessly and publicly extended to them, *have attacked* the posts which surrounded the Executive Directory ; but the vigilance of the government and their chiefs of the armed force have defeated their criminal attempts.'

" In the second edition, the false words *have attacked*, were superseded by the words *were to have attacked* ; and it was announced that any one attempting to recall the monarchy, or the constitution of the year I, or of Orleans, would be shot.

This last observation of Carnot, induced me to remark that the Duke of Orleans was dead at the time alluded to.

" ' Yes,' said Prince Cambacérès, ' but he had left sons behind him. The elder, whom he had seen maintaining so favourable an attitude with the Moderates, previously to February 1793, was still labouring to gain a party for himself, and I saw that he was succeeding.'

" Among all the astonishing things one sees now, observed I, not the least extraordinary is to see the Duke of Orleans in France. The Bourbons are not very quick sighted ; if they do not perceive the constant danger to which they are exposed by suffering, within two paces of the throne, a Prince who is qualified to ascend it.



“ I was surprised at the coolness with which my remark was received. No person present appeared to notice it. There was a short pause, which David broke, by the following observation, which he made as naturally as if the course of the conversation had led to it—

“ ‘ The Emperor, without, perhaps, being a passionate lover of the fine arts, knew their importance in a state. He was anxious that they should engross a great share of public attention. I went to pay my respects to him immediately after the 18th Brumaire. As soon as he saw me, he saluted me by the title of the French Apelles, and asked me what subject I was engaged on.’

“ I replied, Leonidas at Thermopylæ. He shrugged his shoulders and said :

“ ‘ Ah David, you are always painting the Greeks and Romans, and, what is still worse, the conquered !

“ ‘ Yes, Citizen David, pursued he, the conquered. Is it conformable with the principles of reason that three hundred men should face three millions ? If they do so, they are not heroes but madmen, and fit to be sent to the Petites-Maisons. All resistance should be rational, and should be founded on a probability of success ; otherwise, whatever name may be given to it, it is pure extravagance, and ought not to be recorded



in pictures on account of the bad example that would be conveyed. A small number of men may cause the failure of a great movement, by an imprudent and obstinate defence. I advise you to make choice of some incident in our own history. Modern times are not wanting in good subjects.'

" I was somewhat astonished by these remarks, which were by no means in accordance with my predilection for the antique. I approached the First Consul and said in a voice loud enough to be heard by him alone :

" Perhaps a coronation might meet with approval.

" ' Not just yet,' replied Bonaparte, laughing. ' Ah ! republican, there is a wide difference between that and Thermopylæ. However, do what you please ; your pencil will confer celebrity on any subject you may handle. For every great historical picture you choose to paint, you shall be paid a hundred thousand francs.'

" Subsequently, he was proclaimed Emperor. The first time he saw me, after this change, he beckoned me to approach him. I obeyed.

" ' Have you any designs ready ?' inquired he.

" I understood his hint, and, bowing, replied It is not designs that are wanting ; but where is the ceremony to be fixed, and in what costume ?'



“ ‘ We will speak of this matter another time.’

“ Would any one have imagined that, after this conversation, I should not have been appointed to execute the programme of the coronation? Yet, I was passed over, and the commission was given to Isabey. The details were all collected from the past, it is true: but they bore no trace of the glory of the Roman empire. The Emperor himself directed a great share of his attention to the regulation of the costumes and decorations. He arranged the escutcheon of the empire.”

Here Count Fabre de l’Aude observed, that in his post of Procureur-General of the *Conseil du sceaux des titres* he had had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with some particulars not generally known, which he would relate to us.

“ At first,” continued the Count, “ the First Consul was recommended to assume the title and functions of king. ‘ That will not do,’ he replied, ‘ royalty was destroyed on the scaffold of Louis XVI, and it would be requisite to exhume it from the ruins in which it lies buried. The title of Emperor would be the thing that would enable me to leap over an interval of ten centuries. Then I should be, not the successor of Henry IV, or of Philip Augustus, but of Charlemagne, and thus linked with the Roman



empire. This would entitle me to the supremacy over other crowned heads, and to the Protectorate of Germany. With the title of Emperor, I might style myself supreme ruler of Italy. I should neither violate nor cause to be violated any oath: and every one would be satisfied.'

"Napoleon addressed these words to Count Regnault, who laughed, and said:—"I assure you I should not be very deeply vexed, if you should oblige me to commit perjury in such a case. We have taken so many oaths, that it would be no easy matter to find out which is the right one. If you wish for the imperial title, be it so: its novelty will please, and the nation will readily adopt it. The nation dislikes only the Committee of Public Safety and the directors. But, before you can take your rank among the sovereigns of Europe, you must have a coat of arms. Will you adopt your father's escutcheon, which is azure, a gold rake in pale, with three fleur-de-lis, two in chief, one in point?"

" 'My dear Count,' replied Napoleon, 'you are quite mistaken. Where did you learn that that was the Bonaparte escutcheon? Whoever told you so, had not consulted the registers of the military school, where my brothers and I were educated, nor the archives of Saint Cyr,



where my sister Eliza was brought up. If they had, they would have known that our shield is gules with two bars of gold, accompanied in chief sinister and in point dexter by a star of gold. The shield supported by two Gothic letters B and P, and surmounted by a Count's coronet. Madame Permon, likewise, made me a present of the arms of her family, the Comneni. But I shall not take the one or the other. It is my wish to be in all things amalgamated with France. She is my adopted mother, and we will both bear the same shield.'

"Then," resumed Regnault, "you would make choice of the old Gallic cock; and he may hold in his claws a tri-coloured standard?"

"The cock," said Napoleon, "in spite of his good qualities, is not a sufficiently dignified representative of a great nation. We must have an animal more imposing, more emblematic of power: an elephant for example, or a lion couchant on the map France, with one paw thrust forward to the boundary of the Rhine, and the device. *Gare à qui me cherche.*'

"*Ma foi!*" exclaimed Regnault, "but why should we determine limits, which the lion may show himself inclined to overstep?"

"Napoleon approved of this hint, and began to think of something else. Regnault



suggested the fleur-de-lis. The mere utterance of the word produced an effect almost electrical.

“ ‘Never !’ exclaimed Napoleon ; ‘ those ensigns of a proscribed family shall never again be seen among us. I am not the son of Louis XVI. I commence a new dynasty, or rather, I found an empire. Let us not revive old recollections, but adhere to our young institutions. My dynasty will not be that of Hugues Capet, —it will be my own, and will commence with myself. Names and things are the same : your fleurs-de-lis and white flags belong to the Bourbons ; I will, therefore, retain the three colours with which they were driven away. We must recognize, by the difference of form and colour, the banner round which we are to rally, should the conflict commence again. You seem not to be aware of the influence of recollections on mankind ; unfurl a white flag, embroidered with fleur-de-lis, and one half of France will regard as inevitable the return of Louis XVIII, an event which no one now dreams of..... I am Emperor !..... I succeed Charlemagne and the Cæsars, and I must have their emblems. The empire and myself will, therefore, adopt an eagle with spread wings, adorned with a thunder-bolt. The eagle shall be of gold, on a field..... What colour is considered noblest ? gules, I think..... Well, then, on a field of gules.



But, stay,—the Parisians might think that too red. It would furnish a subject for jests ; and it would be said that my eagle, instead of hovering in the air, was swimming in blood.’

“ Would you have the mantle embroidered with eagles ? ”

“ ‘ No, that would have a bad effect. I would have gold stars, or rather gold bees. The latter would be a national emblem, for bees were found in the tomb of Chilperic. That insect is the symbol of industry. The stars will be for me, and the bees for the people. These, and the gold eagle, with the thunderbolt in his claws, on a field of azure, picturing the Heaven to which he is soaring :—these are more than sufficient. Then, for my livery, I shall have green. I will not have blue, lest that should revive the memory of the Bourbons. The tri-coloured flag will lead us to victory ; and the French of the next generation will have nothing in common with their forefathers. The lily will be irrevocably abolished. Our national colours and emblems will all refer to me ; and to our descendants I shall be the founder of all things.’ ”

When Count Fabre had ceased speaking, we all with one accord expressed our admiration of the depth of Napoleon’s perceptions.

“ I recollect,” said Prince Cambacérès,



“ about the beginning of January 1804, having an interview with the First Consul on some public business. Having arranged the affair about which we met, I rose to take leave of him, but he detained me, saying, ‘ It is not late ; stay and let us have a little conversation together. I wish very much, my dear colleague, to have your opinion respecting my present position. Foreign powers treat me well, it is true, but, having no confidence in the stability of our government, they hesitate to form any close alliance with me. The hereditary consulate staggers them. They think it strange that I should be the hereditary chief of the government, whilst, on the other hand, I am only the first magistrate of the republic. This is a stumbling block in the way of diplomatic relations. What is your opinion? is there no way of getting out of this difficulty ?’

“ I candidly confess, gentlemen,” said Prince Cambacérès, addressing himself to us “ that my imagination was every day wandering to a better order of things. The melancholy trial we had made of the republic, had sufficiently proved that that form of government was unfitted to a vast state, in which every citizen cannot keep watch over the universality of the citizens, and consequently can but imperfectly guard against the establishment of tyranny.



The prosperity which had now succeeded to terror, famine and depression, the re-establishment of commerce, the flourishing state of agriculture, the restoration of religion and the arts :—all convinced me of the advantage of a monarchy, especially with a chief like the First Consul. Thus I had accustomed myself to reflect on the subject, and, when Napoleon broached it, I frankly broke the ice. I stopped short, for I was walking up and down the room, and said—

“The only question is to ascertain whether the pear be ripe ; if it be, make haste and gather it !”

“ ‘ Who can inform us of the fact ?’ ”

“The prefects and the electoral colleges. Let us venture a few hints, and see how they are taken. For my own part, I am convinced that there is in the mass of the nation, a complete re-action in favour of monarchy.”

“ ‘ You are of opinion, then, that the restoration of monarchy would not be viewed unfavourably ?’ ”

“All right minded men wish for it.”

“ ‘ But, my dear colleague, it surely would not do to be re-established in favour of the Bourbons ?’ ”

“Certainly not..As to me, I am quite ready to lend my co-operation in the great work.”



“ ‘ You are wise . . I have reflected on this subject . . I would not accept the title of king . . I should wish to present myself to France and to Europe under a new title, more imposing and more elevated. I would not revive the royalty of Hugues Capet ; I would re-establish the empire of Charlemagne. This would at once elevate the newly-created Cæsar above the kings of Europe, and would enable him, hereafter, to recover the privileges annexed to the western empire, and which Germany has wrested from France.’

“ That is a grand idea.”

“ ‘ Besides, we have, it is true, all vowed hatred to royalty ; but we have taken no such oath against imperial sovereignty. The title of emperor will not be revolting to any republican conscience. I am firmly of opinion that, if they think of changing the present state of things, it is to an empire only that we must direct our views.’

“ But,” said I, “ in adopting the forms of the Roman republic, (of which we already have the tribunes, the quæstors, and the prefects,) would you preserve, under the emperor, the two consuls, the one having charge of the finances, and the other of the general administration?”

“ ‘ No,’ quickly answered Napoleon, ‘ the



title of Consul would naturally disappear as soon as the post ceases to be annual. The titles of prince arch-chancellor, and of prince arch-treasurer, would appropriately supersede them.'

"Then the arch-chancellorship is disposed of," said I, feeling confident that the lion would set apart that share for me.

"Here our first conference ended. Others afterwards took place, which were attended by MM. Regnault, Fabre de l'Aude, Maret, de Fermont, Fourcroy, Fontanes, and Monge; Marshals Davoust, Perignon, Masséna, Moncey, Mortier, Ney, Bessières, and Bernadotte. This last was not very manageable. However, his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte, by some adroit contrivance, succeeded in diverting him from his intention of giving a negative vote to the creation of the empire. Providence has rewarded him for this return to rational ideas, by elevating him to a throne, on which he reflects glory, and where he enjoys happiness.

"It appears to me that, heretofore, the general of the republic, the marshal of the empire, the Prince de Ponte-Corvo, the Prince Royal of Sweden, in fine, King Charles John Bernadotte, has not had justice rendered to him: his character and conduct have not been duly ap-



preciated. Almost all the judgments hitherto pronounced on that exalted personage have been dictated by passion. It is my intention to write a faithful history of his life in which it shall be my endeavour to paint him as he really is. In the course of time, France will be enabled to understand the merits of the King of Sweden, who is one of the most illustrious of her sons:—she will perceive, too, the advantage she enjoys, (after having lost Spain) in having in the north of Europe a monarch a native of her own territory, and whose posterity will ever bear in mind that their ancestor was the compatriot of Henry IV. The lives of Charles, John, and Prince Eugene, will soon employ my pen.”



### CHAPTER III.

Secret audience granted by His Majesty Louis XVIII to Cambacérès—Carnot's Memorial—Gloomy forebodings—How their fulfilment might be avoided—A comic scene with three serious characters—Freemasons and White Penitents—Anecdote of the Princess Borghese—Madame Mère—Story of a Vampire related by Fouché, when Minister of the Police—The Lady of the Forest, a Languedocian anecdote—Mysterious disappearances—Baron Pasquier, the Prefect of Police—Parisian thieves and swindlers—The diamond shoe-buckles—The pretended Russian Prince and the *parure* of diamonds—The snuff-box and the robber duped—Robespierre and the English—A proposed marriage between Robespierre and a Royal Princess—Robespierre's blue coat, and bouquet of tri-coloured flowers—A story related by Tallien—A second proposition for a marriage between Robespierre and a Princess—True cause of the death of the Duke of Orleans.

I CALLED on the Prince one evening early. He had dined alone: I found him in excellent spirits, and I told him so.

“ You will not be surprised at that,” said he, “ when you hear what I am going to tell you.



You know how much I am attached to Paris ; in short, that I cannot live any where else. Nevertheless, it was the wish of the government that I should quit France ; this annoyed me exceedingly, and I resolved to have the point decided one way or other. I did not appeal to the Abbé de Montesquiou, (the minister of the interior) nor to M. de Talleyrand, (grand chamberlain and minister for foreign affairs) nor to M. de Blacas, (the minister of the King's household and his Majesty's favourite) : I very cavalierly passed over them all, and addressed myself directly to Louis XVIII. The frank and decided tone of my letter pleased the King. I was informed that he would consent to receive me, but that it must be in the utmost privacy, and on condition that the opposition papers should say nothing on the subject. I pledged myself for the observance of this last condition, and this morning I saw the King."

" You saw him, Monseigneur ?" I exclaimed.

" And did he receive you graciously ?"

" His Majesty was alone in his closet ; and I was admitted by a stair-case appropriated to persons of the household, and with which I was very well acquainted in the Emperor's time. On entering the King's presence, I made my obeisance with the utmost possible respect, and His Majesty then said :



“ ‘ Duke de Cambacérès, I am very glad to see you. I know all that you have done for my faithful servants. I know, too, that your vote on the occasion of the fatal trial, was not for the sentence of death, and that it was your intention to elude it. I entertain a high opinion of your judgment ; and I have reason to rejoice that Bonaparte did not listen to your prudent counsel. I am desirous of conferring on you some marks of my approval.’

“ This kindness overwhelms me, Sire, I replied. Your Majesty is aware that during your exile I endeavoured to save you from more than one danger : at Warsaw, for example—

“ ‘ Yes, my cousin, but for your information, the assassin would have taken my life. There is one here who would fain take to himself the credit of the disclosure ; but I know it is due to you. What is your wish ?’

“ To live in Paris, under the dominion of our excellent King.”

“ ‘ I have resolved to banish no one ; and I shall not certainly begin with you. I wish I were so situated as to have it in my power to call you to my council ; but that is not possible, yet. Too many persons, too many prejudices, would oppose such a step. But I trust that time will subdue these hostile feelings. I shall bear in mind that Bonaparte, whose judgment



in such matters cannot be called in question, regarded you as the best head in the empire. I feel convinced that you would not have committed the error of which M. Carnot has been guilty.'

"Carnot had just then published his famous Memorial in which he justified the regicide.

"I expressed my disapproval of Carnot's ill-judged step; and I assured His Majesty that, with the exception of kneeling at the feet of Carnot, I had done everything in my power to dissuade him from giving his unfortunate Memorial to the world. I pointed out to him the pain which it would inflict on all the voters, many of whom were repentant, and that it would render them the objects of persecution. He disregarded my remonstrances. At least, said I, do not expose the Memorial for sale.

" 'It was a most reprehensible proceeding,' said Louis XVIII. 'I was urged to punish him; but I bound my hands, and I am glad I did so. All the happiness of the restoration would have been blighted, had I been compelled to shed blood. Is it not almost inconceivable, Sir, that such an event should have taken place without any violent catastrophe?'

"I assure you, my dear Leon, said Prince Cambacérès, that I was extremely gratified at thus being brought to a subject which enabled



me without flattery to eulogize the King. Sire, said I, your return is a miracle, and your conduct a sublime example of wisdom. Your execution of the will of Louis XVI must ever secure to you the affection and veneration of the nation. May Your Majesty reign long, very long, to consolidate the edifice !”

“ ‘ You are satisfied with the charter ?’ ”

“ It is a bridge thrown over an abyss :— the only path by which the gulf may be passed in perfect safety. It will be the beacon and polar star of the French people.

“ ‘ It appears to me clear and well arranged.’ ”

“ It reserves to the throne all the power necessary for its preservation ; and it leaves to the people all the liberty of which they stand in need. Your Majesty has triumphantly resolved a most difficult problem.

“ ‘ I conjure you, my dear Duke, to use your influence to prevail on the men of the revolution to rally round us. They will find it their interest to do so. Our intention is to follow the example of Bonaparte and to receive every one : to employ men who are capable of being useful, both in military and civil affairs. In the first instance, some acts of injustice have been committed ; but, be assured, I will repair them. I bring with me peace and a prosperity hitherto unknown to France. I have witnessed in England the ad-



vantages of the protection accorded to trade. Union and oblivion are the sole objects of my desire. You are a man of judgment and tact, and you enjoy a high reputation abroad. It excites surprise that you are not in my council ; I tell you again that you will have a place there, and soon. Reside in Paris, or travel : in short, go and come as you please. If, by chance, the spirit of intrigue should destroy your quiet, appeal to me.'

" With these words, the King dismissed me, and I returned home quite transported with my reception. Now, this circumstance must be known to very few, and I have made you one of those few, because I know you to be discreet and attached to me."

I expressed my acknowledgments for the confidence the Duke reposed in me ; but I felt that I deserved it, by the sincere regard I cherished for him. I am gratified in having the opportunity of rendering him justice and recording his virtues. On that same day, I asked him what he thought of public affairs. He closed his eyes, compressed his lips, made a sort of grimace, which certainly did not improve his looks, and, after a minute's reflection, said :

" I should wish to predict nothing but prosperity, and yet I see the future overclouded by storms. The Emperor's stay in the Isle of



Elba will only be temporary. They are driving him to return to France. If he should come back, all that is done will be undone, and Europe will be convulsed for more than half a century. The King is a monarch of the rarest merit. If he do not fall a victim to some political tempest, he will die on the throne. But, after him, unwise counsellors will be listened to ; women will resume their sway ; frivolity will be considered one of the cardinal virtues among the higher ranks. The army and literary men, who form an order in the state, will be dissatisfied, and the whole edifice will totter to its foundation."

"And how is this catastrophe to be avoided, Monseigneur ?"

"By following the tact of the Emperor. The change that has taken place should have been regarded merely as a question of persons, and not of principles. The Emperor was dead ; we had only to cry *Vive le roi ! . . . .* The King was precisely the same as the Emperor. Every thing was in its place, and every functionary at his post. Except that the chief of the state bore the title of King, we were still in the empire. The tri-coloured flag and the eagle were abolished, it is true, and fleurs de lis were substituted for bees. These were the only changes, and no official man was to be removed from his post,



except by death or voluntary resignation. Had this plan been strictly adhered to, all pretext for discontent and recrimination would have been removed. Custom had moulded us to obedience; we could dispense with the liberty of the press, and even with personal liberty. The severity of the conscription being mitigated by the establishment of peace, general happiness would have prevailed. But, instead of this, we are threatened with complete change, which has the effect of inspiring fear. All this will end badly. What do you propose to do?

“To keep myself aloof; to look on at passing events, and await their result.”

“Do not become a member of any association.”

“Monseigneur, I have resolved neither to become a free-mason nor a penitent; and, moreover, I am resolved to keep myself clear of that host of intriguers, who are divided into two sections: rogues and dupes.”

“What!... You are a native of Montpellier, transplanted to Toulouse and Carcassone!... and is it possible that you have not put on either the blue gown or the black, the grey or the white?”

“My father-in-law, who is Prior of the white brotherhood of Carcassone, entered my name in the association; but that was not enough: it was necessary to have my person,



also, and that was not quite so easy. My father-in-law now found himself in a difficulty. He knew that a direct refusal was not to be thought of. Consequently, one day when I was busily engaged writing in my library, the door was opened, and the servant announced some gentlemen from the brotherhood of the White Penitents of Carcassone. I was confounded. I rose from my chair, and beheld all the dignitaries before me, except the prior, who, for good reasons, had entrenched himself behind the door. The spokesman of the party stepped forward and repeated the names of all my ancestors who had been *penitents*, and informed me that all my relations, now existing, were penitents also ; after saying which, he wound up his speech by the flattering intimation that, at the express request of M. G ——— and my father-in-law, I had been unanimously received a member of the brotherhood. This was a critical moment. To decline the honour, appeared next to impossible ; and might perhaps have been attended, with danger. Fanaticism is not yet extinct in the south. I, therefore, bowed, profoundly, and said : Gentlemen I should feel highly honoured in being associated with you ; but there is an insurmountable obstacle in the way. I am a jansenist, and, consequently, cannot become a white penitent. The solemn tone in which I uttered this announcement carried conviction



to the minds of the worthy citizens, who, though very good men of business, were profoundly ignorant, (and Heaven grant they may continue so) of the propositions of the Bishop of Ypres, and of the formidable dispute to which the Bull *Unigenitus* had given rise. What is a jansenist? thought they....Doubtless a member of some brotherhood, cherishing feelings of rivalry and jealousy towards *the Whites*.

“A few half whispered remarks were interchanged, and then one of the deputation said:

“ ‘Oh then! if Monsieur is a jansenist, he of course cannot join us....But your name.. you can surely let us have your name?’

“I trust gentlemen, replied I, that you are too well aware of the duties of a jansenist to make such a proposition seriously.

“Exclamations of regret were renewed; and I, being tolerably well practised in the art of getting rid of tiresome visitors, provoked a retreat: I followed the party through the suite of drawing-rooms and down the staircase, and, being closely pressed under the entrance vestibule, they were completely routed. There I abandoned the pursuit of the enemy, who, however, rallied for the purpose of calling the venerable prior, my father-in-law, to account for the mistake into which he had led them, whilst I returned to my library, and prepared myself for a family storm.”



“Then you are a jansenist?” said Prince Cambacérès, who had been not a little amused at my story.

“Ah, Monseigneur ! Heaven forbid ! In religion, as well as in politics, I am for unity. I approve and condemn those things, which are approved and condemned by the Church. I admire the learning of Port-Royal, but I fear the institution tends to republicanism.”

“During the revolution, we saw dozens of jansenists under the jacobin flags.”

“Alas ! we did, Monseigneur. Submission to authority is a doctrine which enables a man to sleep soundly ; and he is not a bit the worse for it.”

“The awkward dilemma in which your father-in-law placed you, though with very good intention, reminds me of an incident, somewhat similar, which occurred to myself.”

“Pray tell it me, Prince, said I ; it will be a valuable contribution to those notes which you and some of your friends have so kindly enabled me to collect.”

“You shall have it most willingly. In the anecdotes with which I have furnished you, there are many piquant traits which I should be very sorry to lose. I may not be inclined to insert them in my Memoirs, and, if I do not, commit them to paper they will be lost. I therefore consign them to you, with permission



to make what use of them you please. And now for my story.

“The Emperor had reached the zenith of his prosperity. He was making kings with as much ease as he was making marshals. Murat had just been transferred from the grand Duchy of Berg to the throne of Naples, when one morning a carriage drove into my court-yard and a lady alighted from it. Ah Miséricorde ! I exclaimed, it is her Imperial Highness the Princess de Guastalla (Madame Borghese, the beautiful Pauline Bonaparte). I was hastening down stairs to receive her with all due ceremony, when happening to pass a window which looked out to the garden, I beheld advancing towards the house . . . . who, but the Emperor himself. He rang at a back door, usually appropriated to the servants, and entered. He was I think accompanied by Berthier. Here was a rencontre ! . . . . It was Scylla and Carybdis ! I might perhaps have feigned not to recognise the Emperor, but, with a most imperative gesture, he beckoned me to him. I therefore turned to the right about, and, leaving the Princess to find her way to the drawing-room unattended, I hurried to the Emperor.

“ ‘ Prince,’ said he, as soon as I was in his presence, ‘ I know that my sister wishes to speak with you. Shew me into an adjoining



room, where I may hear her break her thunderbolts. Say what you can to appease her, but do not pledge me for any thing....Go to her quickly....She will never forgive you for keeping her waiting.'

"I thought of the fatal position of Germanicus with Nero in Racine's tragedy, in the scene in which Junie complains to the former of the cruelty of the latter. I had prepared myself for a most violent reception, but all my expectations fell short of the reality. The Princess, as soon as she saw me, taxed me with my want of respect, and complained of not having found me waiting to receive her at the door of my hotel. This first ebullition of ill humour, being exhausted, I said :—

"Madam, if your Imperial Highness had been pleased to give me notice of your intention to confer on me this honour, I should undoubtedly have observed the due etiquette. But, as I am not endowed with prescience, it was only a few minutes ago that I learned, from my servants, that the sister of our august monarch was in my house."

" 'His sister, Sir! rather say an unfortunate, a forsaken, a miserable slave!'

"Is it possible, Madam, that, enjoying as you do, the favour of His Imperial Majesty, you can have any cause of complaint?"



“ ‘ His favour ! What a mockery ! Does he show his favour by degrading me ? ’

“ No, Madam, but by having elevated you to the dignity of an Imperial Princess, by having conferred on you the Duchy of Guastalla, and united you to a Roman Prince !

“ ‘ A brilliant marriage, truly ! . . . . An illustrious rank ! I have indeed reason to congratulate myself when I see Caroline a Queen, my sister-in-law a Queen, and then Josephine’s daughter a Queen, or on the point of becoming one : and I suppose there is a kingdom in store for Jerome’s wife ! . . . . Eliza, too, will be crowned by and bye ; whilst I am nothing . . . . Hear me, Prince Cambacérès . . . . Go immediately to Bonaparte, and tell him, that if he does not raise me to the dignity of Queen, I have a terrible vengeance in reserve for him.’

“ But which your sisterly affection will not permit you to inflict.”

“ ‘ My affection ! . . I hate him . . . . he is a monster.’

“ Hush ! Princess ! I exclaimed with some alarm. Know that in France walls have ears.”

“ ‘ I care not . . . . I defy his police . . . . and I would tell him all I have said to his face . . . . I will seek refuge in England, or he shall perish by my hand.’

“ I became more and more alarmed, and I



was about to reply, when the Emperor saved me the trouble. He opened the door, and presented himself to the astonished Princess.

“ ‘Maniac!’ he exclaimed you shall not go to England, but to Charenton.’

“ ‘Ah! so you have followed me,’ she said. ‘Then you thought I really intended to throw myself into the Seine as I threatened! I have come here to request Prince Cambacérès to intercede for me.... Now, my dear Napoleon, I must have a crown.... I don’t care where it is.... Make me Queen of Portugal,—or Denmark, what you will.... I would even reign in Switzerland or Corfu.... no matter where.... but a crown I must have.... Am I to be the only one of the family who does not wear one?.... Oh, Napoleon! your unkindness will kill me!’

“ With these words, she burst into a flood of tears.... The capricious beauty had changed her imperious tone to one of supplication, and tender reproach. The Princess Pauline was certainly a most fascinating woman; but, at that moment, she appeared to me more charming than ever. I could not wonder at the ascendancy she gained over the Emperor. He was at first in a violent rage; but his anger was gradually soothed, and, when Pauline stopped short in her appeal to him and burst into tears, he advanced to her, and said affectionately:—



“ ‘ My dear sister, why are you not satisfied ? I am doing all I can for you . . . . Kingdoms cannot be created at my will. Besides, your husband is not a Frenchman.’

“ ‘ Let me have a divorce, then.’

“ ‘ Heaven forbid !’

“ ‘ I will be a Queen, or I will go to London.’

“ ‘ You shall go to Vincennes.’

“ ‘ I defy you ! . . I will strangle myself as I enter.’

“ I know not what circumstance was recalled to Napoleon’s mind by this threat ; but his brow lowered, his eyes flashed, and he bit his lips till he almost drew blood ; and then, in a voice faltering with emotion, he exclaimed :

“ ‘ So much the better, Madam ! You will rid me of a termagant, whom I find more difficult to govern than all Europe together ! . . . I see that you are only to be ruled by a rod of iron. I therefore command you to go immediately to Madame Mère, and there await the orders which the Prince Arch-Chancellor shall deliver to you from me.’

“ ‘ Then will you make me a Queen ? . . — I must be crowned.’

“ ‘ Really, Pauline, to hear you, one would imagine that I had wronged you of your right of succession to the late King our father.’

“ I had never before known the Emperor to



have recourse to this sort of pleasantry, but I often afterwards heard him employ similar language. On the occasion which I have first been describing, this good-humoured touch of satire, had an excellent effect. Pauline blushed, and a rapid glance at the past reminded her of her humble origin, contrasted as it was with the high rank to which her brother had raised her. A sudden change was effected in her feelings. She hung down her head, and was evidently mortified and ashamed. Napoleon asked her whether she had come alone. She named one of her ladies, I do not recollect whom, and said she was waiting in another apartment.

“ ‘ Let her come in,’ said the Emperor.

“ I rang,—the order was given, and the lady appeared. The Emperor directed her not to lose sight of the Princess Borghese, and then turning to me, he added :

“ ‘ Let us retire to your cabinet.’

“ I am at Your Majesty’s disposal, replied I ; but permit me first to observe the ceremony due to the Princess.

“ ‘ Well, well ! only be quick !’

“ He proceeded to my cabinet, and I escorted the Princess to her carriage. As soon as I had got rid of her, I flew to wait on the Emperor. I found him walking about the room with hurried steps.



“ Well, Prince !” said he, as soon as I entered, ‘ this is one of the thousand disagreeable scenes which tyrant, as they say I am, I am compelled to endure. This morning Pauline came to me, commenced an altercation, assumed an imperative tone, and ended by threatening to drown herself. Seeing the excited state she was in, and knowing her violent temper, I became alarmed. She left me ; I followed her, and, as soon as she stepped into her carriage, I took possession of the first cabriolet I saw standing in the court-yard of the Tuileries. She drove across the bridges ; I suspected she was coming to you,—I entered by your back door and you know the rest. . . . A crown for a Borghese ! . . . Such a proposition would excite an insurrection in the army ! . . . The Borghesi are of pure blood royal, I knew ; but kings of my creation must be of my own blood, and must have received the baptism of the sword. However, I am anxious to soothe Pauline. Her husband shall be made Governor of Piedmont. Tell her this from me ; and, moreover, that I will give her a million francs to clear off her debts and reset her diamonds . . . A million francs ! . . . What a sum ! . . . How much happiness it would diffuse if distributed ! Ah Prince ! What a cross is a numerous family to a man like me ! I have always envied the happiness of Melchisedech, who



never knew father, mother, brother, and, above all, sisters !

“ The Emperor explained to me his intentions and returned to the Tuileries. I proceeded to the residence of Madame Mère. That venerable and dignified matron was depreciated only by those who did not know her. I who knew her well, am enabled to say that there never was a better mother or a more estimable woman. The last time I saw her, which was during the events which terminated in the fall of her son, she said to me :

“ ‘ Whatever may be the issue of all this, I shall not complain, provided Napoleon retires without any compromise of honour. To fall is nothing when we fall nobly ; but death is a thousand times preferable to any mean concession.’ As she uttered these words, she raised her fine classical head, and looked like the bust of Agrippina.

“ She had heard of the misunderstanding between the Emperor and the Princess. Whenever any of her children rebelled against Napoleon, she always reproved them, saying : ‘ My husband transmitted his power to Napoleon. You must all obey him, for he is your father.’ On this principle, she had already remonstrated with her beautiful and refractory daughter, Pauline. Madame Mère received me with all the



courtly ceremony which her lady of honour, the Countess de Fontanges, knew so well how to maintain. I was received by the *ci-devant* Duke de Brissac, then a Count, a senator, and Madame Letitia's gentlemen in waiting."

" 'I have spoken to the Princess,' said Madame Letitia, as soon as I was ushered into her presence, 'and she is convinced of her mistake.' I repeated the Emperor's words. When Madame Borghese heard them, she frowned most superbly, and, foreseeing, that some warm words would probably ensue between the mother and daughter, I beat a retreat, and hurried back to the Tuileries to inform the Emperor that I had obeyed his orders.

" 'Is she grateful?' he inquired. I told him candidly how his message had been received.

" 'Ah!' said the Emperor, 'she will not easily give up her point. I well know her resolute disposition. She has set her heart on a crown; but she shall never have one.' "

There was always some curious anecdote to be gathered from the conversation of Prince Cambacérès. In one of my evening visits to him, he related the following story:

" One day when the Emperor had detained me longer than usual, the Minister of the Police (the Duke of Otranto) sent to request an immediate audience.



“ ‘ What can he want,’ said the Emperor. ‘ Stay, Prince Cambacérès, I like to have a witness when he is with me.’ (The Emperor was then beginning to be distrustful of him.) Fouché entered, and began to converse about some general topics relating to the police, and then he proceeded as follows :

“ ‘ A very singular circumstance has taken place at the Hotel Pepin, Rue Saint-Eloi. About twelve days ago, a man named Rafin took up his abode there ; owing to some suspicious circumstances which were communicated to the police, he has been made the object of special *surveillance*. He is well dressed, and good looking, except that there is a certain expression of fierceness in his countenance. In the day time, he visits several families in Paris, and, in the evening, he leaves his hotel at eleven o’clock precisely ; sometimes he goes on foot, at other times in a fiacre ; but he always proceeds to the same place, namely, the burial ground of Père-Lachaise, and, as soon as he arrives there, my agents lose sight of him. At four o’clock in the morning, he is again seen in the vicinity of the burial ground. He then resumes his way to the Hotel Pepin, and gets there before day light. These circumstances regularly recurring night after night, excited the astonishment of my people. Rafin is distinctly kept in



view, and is dogged step by step from the moment of his leaving the hotel, until he arrives near Père-Lachaise. There he is always lost sight of. A party of police agents have been stationed in the interior of the burial place; but nothing has been discovered.'

" 'Duke of Otranto,' exclaimed the Emperor, 'this is a strange phantasmagorical story.... Do you suspect that Rafin is a vampire?'

" 'That would be a rarity in France, Sire, in the nineteenth century.'

" 'What do you think he is, then?'

" 'I cannot guess.'

" 'Will you have him arrested?'

" 'He has committed no offence, and therefore I hesitated.'

" 'You are right. It is sufficiently painful to be compelled to fill our state prisons with maniacs, who take pleasure in running headlong to their own ruin. I do not approve of preventive measures. They are always tyrannical. With such a system, where can one stop.... But this is a very mysterious gentleman. Have his papers been examined during his absence?'

" 'Yes, Sire, and nothing suspicious has been found.'

" 'Is his passport correct?'

" 'The description of his person is not precisely accurate. There is even some appearance



of erasure and alteration of the writing in some parts. We know not what to make of this man ;—but we shall keep a vigilant eye upon him.'

" I was much surprised at this curious disclosure," continued Prince Cambacérès, " and some time afterwards, when Fouché happened to call on me, I thought of Rafin, and I inquired whether the mystery had ever been cleared up.

" ' Prince,' said he, ' I could almost be tempted to believe that we are not in the nineteenth century ; but in the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh or even earlier . . . There are some extraordinary impositions practised in this world.'

" What have you discovered ?

" ' I will tell you. My brigade being not a little mortified by the way in which Rafin constantly eluded their vigilance, determined to take a decisive step : and, accordingly, one night they arrested him when within a few yards of Père Lachaise. At one blow he knocked down two of the police officers, who alleged that they had not been struck by a man's arm but by a bar of iron. The others surrounded and arrested Rafin. He was perfectly calm, and he showed by the light of one of the street lamps, the papers which he carried about with him ; these papers consisted of a map of Paris, a passport, a certificate of his birth, and, in short, every thing



that was requisite to entitle him to the privilege of nocturnal perambulation in our good city. As it was wished to take him by surprise, the police agents affected to be satisfied. He gave them an *à boire* in payment of the cudgelling he had inflicted, and all separated amicably. Some of the police officers, however, turned and followed Rafin, and, after watching him for some distance, they lost sight of him, as usual.

“ ‘ At four o’clock one of the men, who were still on the watch, gave a signal to his comrades that he saw Rafin, and all hastened to his assistance. In order to put him off his guard, a peace officer was procured, and he arrested all the persons who happened to be passing by, (three or four in number) and Rafin among the rest. They were all searched. In Rafin’s pockets were found the same papers, which he produced a short time before, and nothing to which suspicion could attach. The men who searched Rafin, declared that they were nearly suffocated by the horrible odour which issued from every part of his body.

“ ‘ Two days elapsed ; and Rafin continued to go out every day. Among the persons he visited, there was a young girl who followed the business of a milliner. Inquiries were made about her, and it was ascertained, that though she had previously been a fresh, healthy, lively girl, she had, since Rafin had known her, become pale



and sickly. At another of his visiting places, a widow who had been remarkably stout and ruddy, suddenly became pale and emaciated. On the third day, a young man about four and twenty called at the Hotel Pepin. He inquired for Rafin, and being informed, by the porter, that he was out, he appeared much vexed. He sat down and waited for him, and, in about an hour, Rafin returned home. The young man, as soon as he perceived him, sprang upon him and seized him by the collar. The prodigious strength of the nocturnal adventurer was overpowered by the fury of his assailant, who called him an assassin and a monster. Feeling himself unable to maintain the struggle, and that his strength was failing him, he drew his knife from his pocket, and stabbed Rafin in the side. It was distinctly seen that he gave him only one stab ; four witnesses, who were present, bore testimony to this fact.

“ ‘ Rafin groaned, relinquished his hold of his adversary, and fell dead. The young man fled, leaving his knife in Rafin’s body. No one pursued him, owing to the consternation which the incident excited. A surgeon was sent for. Rafin was undressed, and it was discovered that he had six bleeding wounds, two in the throat, two in the right side, one in the abdomen, and one in the thigh. All present were confounded. Their testimony concurred unanimously. The young man seized Rafin, and, after a struggle with him, drew



out his knife. He gave him only one stab, and left the knife sticking in the wound. But, instead of one wound, there were six; and, on examination, the knife was found to correspond with only one of the wounds,—that in the side; the rest appeared to have been inflicted by poignards, swords, stilettos, or some other sharp weapon, in no way corresponding with the knife, which the surgeon extracted from the body of Rafin, and examined in the presence of the witnesses.

“ ‘ His apartments were searched, but nothing was found except his clothes, and the papers I have already mentioned: neither money nor property of any description. The passports described him as a citizen of Strasburgh, but, beyond this, there was no clue to discovery. The local authorities could furnish no information, owing to the removal of the registers of Strasburgh during the revolution. Search was made for the young man who had stabbed Rafin. He was speedily found. The account he gave was as follows:—He was paying his addresses to a young female, when Rafin became his rival, and was preferred to him. The girl soon fell into ill health. She complained of frightful nightmares, and affirmed that her blood was nightly sucked by a being of hideous appearance, but who nevertheless bore a resemblance to Rafin. She made this disclosure to the sister of her first lover, who became alarmed at the circumstance. The young man had that morning seen



the object of his affection breathe her last ; and his feelings being powerfully excited, he flew to challenge Rafin. The latter seized him by the throat, and, finding himself nearly choaked, he drew out his knife, not with the design of killing him, but of merely disengaging himself from his grasp.

“ ‘The affair was laid before me,’ pursued Fouché. ‘I was, of course, much astonished, and was puzzling myself to unravel the mystery, when another incident occurred more extraordinary than all the rest. The body of Rafin was deposited in an apartment on the ground floor of the Hotel Pepin, and was to be interred early on the following morning. At the hour appointed for proceeding to the burial-place, what was the astonishment of the persons employed to convey the corpse, to discover on entering the room, that it was gone !—New rumours were afloat. It was by some suspected that body-snatchers had obtained entrance to the room. Active investigations were set on foot; but no discovery was made. About six weeks elapsed ; and you may easily conceive the horror of the porter of the Hotel Pepin, and of the whole neighbourhood, when one day Rafin presented himself and coolly asked for the key of his apartment to procure his clothes. An alarm was raised ; he was secured, and questioned ; and he made the following statement—

“ ‘ Some young medical students stole his body



for the purpose of dissection. When about to commence their operation, the supposed corpse manifested some signs of life. They applied the proper remedies, and finally succeeded in restoring existence. But, as they had been guilty of the offence of abstracting the body, he (Rafin) had taken an oath not to betray them, and he added, that he would submit to every possible torture rather than be ungrateful to those who had rescued him from the grave. All this was plausible and possible enough ; and the story was believed by every one, except myself.

“ ‘ I gave orders to have Rafin arrested, and he was placed in confinement. I paid him a visit. He was strongly bound, and, in spite of his cries, supplications and resistance, I resolutely plunged into his flesh a surgical instrument which, without producing any injury, would cause an effusion of blood. When he perceived my object, he became furiously irritated, and made inconceivable efforts to attack me. He threatened me with his future revenge ; but, heedless of his violence, I thrust the instrument into him. No sooner did the first drop of blood appear, than the six old wounds opened afresh. All efforts to stop the bleeding proved fruitless—and Rafin died.

“ ‘ Eleven persons,’ continued Fouché, ‘ were present at the scene I have just described. Our amazement was inconceivable. We are in the nineteenth century, and we beheld before us a vam-



pire, a blood-sucker. I had expressly summoned MM. Cuvier, Fourcroy, Cadet and Portal. They witnessed the fact, and they were astounded !.... I must acknowledge, however, that they afterwards declared themselves inclined to regard the affair as a police trick,.... a new mode of getting rid of a dangerous individual. They professed their faith in poison, but not in witchcraft, and the silence they have observed, must be attributed less to their promise of secrecy than to the result of a scene, of which they would fain not have been spectators. As to myself, I have sifted the matter deeply, and I am perplexed to the last degree. I cannot admit the reality of vampires ; yet it is certain that I witnessed the facts I have stated. The corpse was rolled in a great number of cloth wrappers, and put into an iron coffin, the head, hands and feet being previously cut off. The whole was then buried. At the expiration of a year, I ordered the coffin to be taken out of the grave. The different parts were all found in an advanced stage of decomposition, but none were wanting ; and Rafin has not returned a second time to demand the key of his apartment. I may add, that the widow whom I have already mentioned, as one of the females to whom Rafin professed to be paying his addresses, died a few days after him, almost wasted to a skeleton.'

"This story," pursued Prince Cambacérès,  
"Fouché himself related to me. I listened to it



with as much faith as I should be inclined to attach to any other wild, incredible tale. It happened that on the evening of the day on which Fouché had related the romance, I was visited by MM. Cuvier, Fourcroy and Portal. I was tempted to allude to the story of the Vampire, and I asked their opinion of the case. These gentlemen, as the Duke of Otranto had informed me, persisted in regarding Rafin's mysterious death as one of the thousand artifices to which the police were then accustomed to resort, in cases of difficulty. Nevertheless, they all acknowledged that the mere effect of the incision of the lancet, *appeared* (I underline the word, on account of the emphasis with which it was pronounced) to cause the re-opening of the six other wounds previously closed. As to the other circumstances of the case, they would vouch for none, and conjured me not to be the means of promulgating reports which would be offensive to them. Two of these distinguished men are dead, and, as the others have passed through a revolution, I imagine it matters but little whether or not their names are mentioned in connexion with this mystification."

I could clearly perceive that Prince Cambacérès himself was by no means inclined to place reliance in the sincerity of the Duke of Otranto, and that he looked upon the presumed Vampire, as something different from a being subsisting on human blood.



Such extraordinary disappearances are, however, less rare than is generally supposed. I recollect having heard Baron Caffarelli, the Prefect of Calvados, relate the following story :

“ About the close of the reign of Louis XV, there lived in the little town of Revel, situated at the foot of the Black Mountain an ancient family named Garriggia, well known in Toulouse. At the time I allude to (1760), the family consisted of three persons : the father, the uncle who was a Knight of Malta, and the only son, a young gentleman of the most promising qualities, who held the rank of Captain at the age of twenty-two, and who had every prospect of making rapid advancement in the army. This young man's name was Eugene. His father and uncle were exceedingly attached to him, especially the latter ; and, anxious to see an heir to the family, he was endeavouring to select a suitable wife for his nephew, from among the noble families of the neighbourhood.

“ But Eugene had not yet bestowed a thought on marriage, and, during the intervals in which his military duties did not engross his time, he devoted himself exclusively to the pleasures of the chase. The ladies, with whom his handsome person and elegant manners, joined to his advantages of birth and fortune, rendered him an especial favourite, were astonished at his indifference. The secret was, that his heart was already engaged. On one of his hunting excursions in the forest of Cailhavel,



he espied a neat little cottage situated on the bank of a rivulet. Being overpowered by the effects of thirst and fatigue, he was induced to knock at the door. It was opened by a young female of surpassing beauty. Her dress was simple, even more so than that of the village girls of the neighbourhood ; but her language and manners were, on the other hand, refined and elegant, and far above her apparent station. She immediately spread a table, and placed before her guest, a true huntsman's repast, consisting of milk, brown bread, chestnuts and eggs. As she declined receiving any remuneration, Captain Garriggia returned a few days afterwards and presented to her a little trinket which he had purchased at Revel. The acquaintance having been thus commenced, Eugene frequently went to hunt in the forest of Cailhavel.

"One evening, his uncle (the Knight as he used to be styled) said to him : ' Well Eugene, you must get married.'

" ' I will think about it, uncle.'

" ' I have already thought about it for you.'

" ' Are you going to select a wife for me ?'

" ' I have already found one.'

" ' Found a wife for me !'

" ' Yes, for whom else should I seek one ?'

" ' But a wife should please her husband.'

" ' Certainly.'

" ' Will the lady you have chosen, please me ?'



“ ‘ You must be very hard to please if she does not. She is one of the Rigaud family.’

“ ‘ That is very well, but still—’

“ ‘ She is seventeen, very handsome and very accomplished.’

“ ‘ My dear uncle, I am not inclined to marry.’

“ ‘ My dear nephew, I say you *shall* marry the lady I have fixed upon.’

“ Whereupon, an argument arose, and Eugene acquainted the Knight with his passion for the beauty of the forest.

“ ‘ But you can never think of marrying her!’ exclaimed the uncle.

“ ‘ Indeed I do,’ replied Eugene.

“ ‘ No.’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ Another dispute ensued in which the father maintained a share. The young man resolutely adhered to his project.

“ Inquiries were set on foot respecting the lady of the forest. No one knew anything of her. She seemed to have fallen from the clouds. She had neither rank, name, nor fortune. A fine marriage for Eugene Garriggia! The Knight repaired to the cottage in the forest of Cailhavel and explained to its fair occupant the obstacles which stood in the way of her projected marriage.

“ ‘ Love will smooth away all obstacles,’ she replied.



“ ‘ But certain qualifications are requisite for forming an alliance with a noble family.’

“ ‘ Who informed you that I am not of noble birth ?’

“ ‘ Where are your proofs ?’

“ ‘ I will produce them only to Eugene.’

“ The Knight returned home, not much satisfied at the result of his errand. An angry discussion arose between Eugene and his uncle. The former reproached the latter for his tyranny and said : ‘ You will repent of this when I am no more.’

“ Having uttered these words, he retired to his chamber and closed the door. The apartment was on the first floor, and had only one door, which communicated with the drawing-room. About an hour after Eugene had withdrawn, dinner was announced. The family assembled at table. Eugene did not appear. His father went to the door of his room, and called him, but received no answer. He opened the door, entered, and perceiving that his son was not in the room, he advanced mechanically to the window. I say mechanically, because he knew it to be fastened up with iron rails. He looked under the bed, in the closets, and in a cabinet which stood in one corner of the room, and which was in the form of a feudal tower. He then went down stairs and acquainted his brother with the mysterious disappearance of his son.



“ ‘ But,’ said the Knight, ‘ neither you nor I quitted the drawing-room, and he could not have left his room without passing through it.’ ”

“ The utmost consternation prevailed. The servants and neighbours assembled; the house was searched from the garret to the cellar. The wells and ponds were dragged: there was no river in the neighbourhood. The Knight, accompanied by some friends, proceeded to the forest of Cailhavel; the cottage was abandoned, and the female who inhabited it, had likewise disappeared.

“ From that day, all trace of Captain Garriggia was lost. No tidings of him were ever after obtained; and his mysterious disappearance could never be explained in any way consistently with the principles of reason. At the time of the Revolution, some collateral relations were preparing to establish legal proof of the disappearance of the direct heir of the illustrious family of Garriggia.”

The extraordinary disappearance of an Englishman, near Hamburgh, excited a good deal of attention at the time of its occurrence. This gentleman was travelling in company with a friend. The horses were harnessed and the postillion had mounted, when the Englishman observed to his companion, that he would be with him in a few moments. He was seen to proceed to the distance of about eight paces from the spot where the post-chaise stood, and he turned the angle of a wall



which was four feet high at most. From that moment, the Englishman became invisible, and every effort to discover him proved ineffectual. Some days after he had disappeared, his waistcoat was found hanging on a bush, and it was proved, beyond a doubt, that it must have been placed there only a few hours before it was found, several persons having carefully searched the spot within that interval.

There are on record many extraordinary stories of the same kind. A curious collection might be formed of all the anecdotes which have come to the knowledge of the Police Ministers and their agents. We were conversing on this subject one evening at the Arch-Chancellor's ; it was during the Empire, and M. Pasquier was Prefect of Police at the time. M. Pasquier observed that, besides street beggars and other vagabonds, there were in Paris thirty thousand individuals, male and female, who rose every morning, without knowing how they were to live out the day. Among the number, he classed the *chevaliers d'industrie*, who speculated on public credulity in a thousand various ways, and always successfully : employing artifices with which they duped persons, apparently not less cunning than themselves. But there is a set of avaricious people who are easily duped : the allurements of gain blind them and lull their suspicions.

M. Pasquier related the two following anec-



dotes :—the one occurred previously to our political troubles, the other more recently.

“ A rich but niggardly old banker had a pair of shoe-buckles worth a thousand louis. He frequently paid an economical visit to the pit of the opera, and, having selected a snug corner, he would seat himself with his back against the wall, to enjoy the master pieces of Gluck and Sacchini. One evening, during the performance of *Œdipe à Colonne*, an elegantly dressed young man seated himself next to the banker, and entered into conversation with him. He suddenly stooped down, rested his foot on the seat before him, took the gold buckles from his shoes, and, having rolled them in a piece of paper, put them into his pocket. Observing that these movements excited some manifestation of surprise on the part of his neighbour, he said :

“ ‘ You are no doubt astonished to see me take out my buckles, Sir, but you would do the same if you were forced to wear gold ones, in consequence of having been robbed as I have, of a pair of diamond buckles, worth six thousand livres.’

“ ‘ How Sir ! robbed do you say, of a pair of diamond buckles . . . Where ?’

“ ‘ Here, Sir, at the opera. Whilst all my senses were entranced by the strains of Gluck’s celestial music, some thieves came and seated themselves near me for the purpose of concealing one of their



companions, who stooped down and putting his hand under the seat, dexterously unfastened my buckles. Did you ever hear of such an artfully contrived theft ?

“ ‘ Bless me, Sir, you alarm me, . . . your buckles were worth six thousand livres. I would not give this pair, which I am wearing, for twenty-four thousand livres. You may therefore easily imagine that I should be very sorry to lose them. I had better take your precaution, and then I shall feel easy.’

“ The worthy banker removed his splendid buckles from their place of safety, wrapped them in his handkerchief, and deposited them in his pocket. In ten minutes after, they again shifted their places, and the banker’s new acquaintance, whose companions were in possession of the booty, politely wished him a good evening. The rage and mortification of the unfortunate dupe may be easily conceived. He never again set eyes on his diamond buckles ; and his only compensation, for the loss of them, was a dearly bought lesson of experience.”

The other anecdote related by M. Pasquier, is as follows.

“ A jeweller of Paris one day saw a splendid equipage drive up to his door, and a tall important looking gentleman alighted from it. He wanted a lady’s set of diamond ornaments, a complete wedding *parure*. The price was fixed at two hundred thousand francs. Several designs were



shewn to him. He made choice of one, said he could grant but little time for executing the order, and insisted on leaving with the jeweller a deposit of four thousand francs in *billets de banque*. He also selected a ring, worth a hundred and twenty francs, and ordered it to be sent home next day : and five days after the whole set of diamonds was to be completed. Accordingly, on the following day, a confidential messenger from the jeweller's repaired to the Hotel D—— in the Rue de la Paix, and inquired for Prince Gargarin. He was shewn into an apartment on the first story. Five or six lackeys were in the antichamber. The prince took the ring, paid for it, and gave a present of ten francs to the messenger, who joyfully returned home, and congratulated his master on having so wealthy and liberal a customer.

“ The jeweller, with the utmost punctuality, carried home the diamonds on the day appointed. The prince was in his study, sitting before his cylindrical secretaire which was open. The jeweller handed the casket to him, and his highness minutely inspected the jewels ; suddenly one of the valets entered the room and announced “ Prince Dolgorouki ” —

“ ‘ Ah ! my brother-in-law, exclaimed his highness. ‘ I do not wish him to see the present which I destine for his sister. Request him to stay in the drawing room, and I will come to him immediately.’ He touched the table, the cylinder



moved and the secretaire closed ; the diamonds were within it ; but on the table there lay an open box filled with leather bags ; and numerous rouleaux of louis were huddled together in confusion. The jeweller had observed all this treasure on his first arrival : but his attention was particularly attracted by a large Russia leather portfolio, well lined with *billets de banque*, the edges of which were visible.

“ His highness left the room, saying he would return very shortly. The jeweller begged he would not hurry himself. About twenty minutes elapsed, and a sort of vague apprehension began to assail the jeweller. At length, the door opened. Oh ! here is his highness thought he. But no, it was the master of the hotel, who, stepping up to the jeweller, said :—

“ Are you waiting for anybody, Sir ?”

“ ‘ I am waiting for the return of Prince Gargarin, to whom I have just sold a set of diamonds for two hundred thousand francs . . . Are you his secretary ?’

“ I am his dupe, and so I presume you are !”

“ ‘ What do you mean ? His dupe ! impossible ! The jewels are shut up in that secretaire. Besides, look at all this money.’

“ He seized one of the leather bags, and, opening it, discovered, to his horror, that it was filled with nails : the rouleaux contained nothing, and the port-



folio, scraps of waste paper. . . However, the jeweller consoled himself— the diamonds were still safe. A locksmith was sent for ; the secretaire was opened, and oh horror ! it was empty. It stood on one side of the room, against a wall in which a hole had been made, and, there being a corresponding hole in the back of the secretaire, the jewels had, with perfect ease been conveyed into the adjoining apartment.

“ The despair of the unfortunate jeweller may be easily conceived. The master of the hotel, too, who had let his apartments to the pretended Prince Gargarin, had been extensively swindled. The servants all belonged to the hotel, with the exception of the *valet de chambre*, who was the companion and confederate of the prince.

“ It was ascertained that they had decamped in a coach from the door of the hotel. Every exertion was made to trace them out, but several years elapsed before they were discovered.

“ The jeweller, who was nearly ruined by this robbery, removed to another quarter of Paris, and established himself under a new name. One day a messenger called on him from M. T——— a gentleman holding an official situation who was very ill and wished to purchase some rings. The poor jeweller had naturally become suspicious ever since his fatal adventure with Prince Gargarin ; and, instead of sending his shopman, he took the rings himself. He was shewn into a bed chamber



which was only partially lighted : owing to the situation of the windows, the room was all in shade, except that part where the bed stood. What was the surprise of the jeweller when he discovered in the invalid M. T———, the swindler who had some years previously defrauded him in the assumed character of the Russian Prince Gargarin ! For a few moments, he was struck dumb with amazement. However, he recovered himself, and, deeming it prudent not to betray the discovery he had made, he displayed his rings ; several were selected, and their price amounted to about six thousand francs.

“ ‘ It is a large sum of money for a poor ruined man,’ said M. T———. ‘ I have not ready cash sufficient to settle the whole amount, and I shall feel obliged if you will take in payment this curious old snuff box, which is of great value.’ ”

“ He asked for his dressing case, and, opening it, took out an octagon-shaped china snuff box, ornamented with ten miniatures by Clinchsteil, set in gold and rubies. It was perfectly unique, and of inestimable value. On beholding it, the jeweller well nigh betrayed himself. The snuff-box which M. T——— presented to him, was one which had been stolen from him a few days before the robbery of his diamonds. The box was too remarkable to admit of the possibility of mistake. Besides, it had a secret spring by means of which all the minia-



tures could be taken out of their settings, and on the reverses were painted similar subjects, but treated in the style of indelicacy peculiar to the age of Louis XV. This circumstance was important in proof of his claim to the possession of the box. When M. T—— asked him to set a value on it, he said without hesitation :—

“ ‘ I consider it worth more than fifty thousand francs.’

“ ‘ Fifty thousand francs !’ exclaimed M. T—— ‘ I thought it valuable . . but this far exceeds my estimation of it.’

“ ‘ Sir,’ resumed the jeweller, ‘ I will not retract what I have said. I am an expert dealer, and to me it may possibly be worth far more than the sum I have fixed. I will make this proposition to you ; you shall take the rings you have selected, and you shall put the box under an envelope stating it to be my property ; and, if it does not bring more than fifty thousand francs, you shall have my rings for nothing.’

“ M. T—— was completely blinded by this deep laid scheme. He was a good connoisseur of objects of *virtu*, and he was not a little gratified to find his box so much overvalued, and to be enabled to obtain the rings without opening his purse. The most exaggerated valuation of the snuff-box would scarcely have exceeded seven or eight thousand francs. He sent for two of his neighbours,



one of whom was a notary, and the matter was arranged conformably with the jeweller's proposition. This being done, the invalid said:—

“ ‘ Who will fix the price of the box ? ’

“ ‘ You, Sir,’ coolly replied the jeweller.

“ ‘ Me ? you are jesting.’

“ ‘ I assure you, Sir, I am quite serious. . I would willingly lay a good wager that you will value the box at five hundred thousand francs.’

“ M. T——— directed at the two witnesses a look which seemed to say, the man is mad ; but the jeweller added :—

“ ‘ You will value it at that price, I am certain you will. But first of all I have to acquaint you with a circumstance connected with this box, which will enable you to perceive its real value.’

“ M. T——— full of curiosity and anxiety, consented to hear the jeweller's communication in private. The two neighbours, taking the box with them, adjourned to the drawing room and M. T—— and the jeweller being left alone, the latter said :—

“ ‘ Sir, it is now about sixteen years ago since that snuff-box was stolen from me, and a short time after you robbed me of fifty thousand crowns worth of diamonds, under the assumed name of Prince Gargarin. I have now discovered you. My evidence relative to the robbery is on record. You have declared the snuff-box to be yours, and I can prove having purchased it at a public sale. I know a secret which will place the truth of my



assertion beyond a doubt. Now, Sir, tell me whether you are inclined to defend yourself in the criminal suit which I intend forthwith to institute against you.'

"Every word uttered by the jeweller fell like a thunderbolt on the ears of M. T——. Overwhelmed with the consciousness of his guilt, his imagination pictured all the horrors of imprisonment, trial, sentence, and the scaffold. He reflected, and the jeweller said :—

" ' Sir, I give you five minutes to form your determination.'

"At the expiration of that interval, M. T—— in a faltering voice directed the jeweller to open a drawer in which he would find *billets de banque* for three hundred thousand francs, and he signed a bond for two hundred thousand francs, payable at his banker's that same day. This being done, the jeweller called in the witnesses.

" ' Gentlemen,' said he, ' I have at length convinced M. T—— of the real value of the snuff-box. You see the price at which he has purchased it back from me.'

" ' I have given five hundred thousand francs,' said M. T——.

" ' Here is your box !' said the jeweller, restoring it, and I will let you have the rings into the bargain.'

"The notary who was no less amazed than the other witness, said :—



“ ‘ There is some mystery in all this.’

“ ‘ Probably there is,’ replied the jeweller, ‘ M. T——— may explain it if he pleases ; for my part, I promise him eternal secrecy.’

“ With these words, he took his departure, leaving the witnesses bewildered in a maze of conjectures. M. T——— though immensely rich, (he was said to possess upwards of three millions) never recovered from the mortification attendant on this unexpected discovery. The jeweller faithfully adhered to his promise of secrecy ; but the subtle machinery of the police unravelled the mystery.”

The following story was related to Prince Cambacérès by an old friend of Robespierre. I am bound, by a promise, not to disclose his name, but the anecdote will not, for that reason, lose any of its interest.

“ About eleven o’clock on the 1st of June 1794, I was surprised at receiving a visit from Robespierre. The lateness of the hour, added to something mysterious in his manner, naturally led me to suppose that he had something very important to communicate.

“ ‘ This is a late visit,’ said he ‘ but I assure you that during the day I have not a moment at my disposal. Public business scarcely leaves me time to breathe. It must be allowed, that a man is very disinterested who devotes himself so perseveringly to the welfare of others.’



“ I could easily perceive that there was something hidden under these words. They seemed to indicate the intention of opening a path which the Dictator had heretofore closed against me. I appeared not to understand him, and made a vague reply, for the purpose of compelling him, if he had any secret design, to explain it clearly. After pacing up and down the room two or three times, and confining his conversation to commonplace topics, he suddenly stopped and folded his arms ; then, turning and looking me full in the face, he said :—

“ ‘ I have something to tell you that will surprise you.. England has proposed peace to me.’

“ To you !” I exclaimed in a tone of astonishment which I could not repress. “ Do you mean to you, or to the Republic ?”

“ ‘ To me first, and to the Republic next,’ said he. ‘ The English cabinet gives me credit for possessing great influence, and hopes that I will grant advantageous conditions, which I do not intend. However, we may hear what is proposed without pledging one’s self to anything.’

“ Certainly,” said I. “ But how do you know that any such project is in contemplation ?”

“ ‘ Mr. Edward Serton has been instructed to see me, and to confer with me on the subject of an arrangement.’

“ What have you decided on ?”

“ ‘ Nothing, I have not yet seen the envoy. I



have merely been informed that he is to arrive in Paris to-night, and I have given orders that he shall be conducted to your house, if you please.'

"Here? to my house?... Consider, such a proceeding will compromise me."

" 'Am not I here?... What have you to fear when I direct the affair? Do not make yourself uneasy. Rest assured that I will release you from all difficulty.'

"But why all this mystery? Cannot the English envoy put up at an hotel?"

" 'No, I must see him before my colleagues of the Committee of Public Safety. He comes in the first instance to me. Afterwards, he may consult with them.'

"Then it would appear that you mistrust them?"

" 'They are my bitterest enemies. My influence mortifies them, and the traitors are plotting against me. Yes, all of them, the austere Carnot, Barrère, the Anacreon of the scaffold, the ferocious Billaud-Varennès, the learned Fréron, the impetuous Tallien,... all my colleagues, whether in the committees or in the convention, hate me. They make me the scape-goat of all their iniquities. They would have it believed that I am the only advocate of the guillotine; whereas, the wretches themselves are wading in blood to their very ears. The fact is, I abhor them. It is my wish to arrange matters so that the republic will be



settled on a broad and secure foundation. I wish to restore order, and to enable the machinery of government to proceed regularly. But how can this be effected, amidst so many conflicting opinions, with so many ill-disposed fanatics?..Do you understand me?’

“ I begin” said I, “ to read your thoughts..you mean to say, that you are playing a game which you are not sure of winning.”

“ ‘ Perhaps I am ; however, it is still worth a risk... But we are wandering from the subject about which I came to speak to you. To-night.. or between one or two in the morning, Mr. Serton will be here. You must receive him in such a way as to lead your servants to suppose that he is a relation of yours. He speaks French without any foreign accent ; for I requested that some one might be sent who would not give rise to suspicion. As soon as he arrives, he will retire to rest ; to-morrow morning, he will rise late and will feign indisposition as a pretext for not going out. I will be here in the evening : it is not necessary that you should be present at our interview ; but do not let it be supposed that you have withdrawn purposely. We must be careful not to awaken suspicion. Be cautious. I should not have made choice of you, had I not felt assured that I could place implicit confidence in you.’

“ With this flattering compliment, he left me, and I must confess in no very agreeable state of



mind. I did not know whether I had any reason to congratulate myself, on being admitted into this important secret. It was evident that Robespierre had some sinister design in treating with Mr. Serton without the knowledge of his comrades. Could he intend to imitate Monck? That was impossible. Such strokes could be attempted only at the head of an army, and the examples of Lafayette and Dumouriez were not very encouraging. Did he contemplate a sort of usurpation to perpetuate his power? That was most probable. In that case, he would be conspiring against the Republic, whilst I should be his confidant, and the accomplice of his ambition. This was not a very pleasant prospect; but was there now any possibility of retracting? Decidedly not... I was now in the power of the monster, and he would send me without hesitation to the guillotine, on the least suspicion of my treachery. Accordingly, having duly weighed all circumstances, I came to the resolution of resigning myself to this new peril.

“ I informed my servants of the expected arrival of my newly-acquired relation; and such preparations as time would permit, were made for his reception. About one o'clock, a knock was heard at the door, and the porter admitted Mr. Edward Serton and his valet. I received my guest in the best manner I could; but of course avoided any allusion to the object of his journey.



“ We embraced, and entered into conversation, as if we had passed the early part of our lives together. To shorten the farce, I conducted *my cousin* to the chamber which had been prepared for him : and, having wished him good night, I retired to bed. However, I did not enjoy much sleep : for my mind was too much disturbed by uneasy thoughts ; neither did I pass the following day more tranquilly. I apprehended a thousand occurrences which might prove fatal to my liberty, and even to my life. I stayed at home nearly all day : and I saw nothing of my guest ; his breakfast and dinner being served in his chamber by his valet.

“ At nine in the evening, Robespierre called. He requested me to introduce him to my relation, which I did, and immediately withdrew. At midnight, Robespierre went away, without seeing me before his departure, and I immediately retired to bed, where the anxiety I had suffered, during the previous night, made me fall into a profound sleep. I rose late on the following morning, and my servant delivered to me a note from *my cousin*, who, on taking leave of me, thanked me for my hospitality, and informed me that I should find in one of the drawers of a secretaire in his chamber a little token of remembrance from *his father, my uncle*. This token proved to be a watch, set round with diamonds, and worth about ten thousand francs. I was mortified that my English guest should value, at so high a price, the asylum I had afforded him



for the space of four and twenty hours. His abrupt departure, too, surprised me.

“ In the evening, Robespierre sent to inform me that he wished me to meet him in the gardens of the Tuileries. I joined him there. He ordered his coachman to drive along the Boulevards as far as the Place de la Bastille. I mentioned to Robespierre the strange conduct of our English visitor, and added that I could not help feeling hurt at it.

“ ‘ Pooh ! you are a novice,’ replied he. ‘ Is it not right to get all we can from the enemies of France ? Besides, presents are indispensable in diplomatic negociators. You may, if you please, send back the watch to *your uncle* George III ; but, I would not advise you to do so. Such a step may be attended by unpleasant consequences.’

“ I understood his hint, and took it as a warning ; but, having found an opportunity of disposing of the watch, I distributed its value among the hospitals of the capital. Robespierre then began to converse on another subject :

“ ‘ Really,’ said he, ‘ the English must be mad . . . They have made me such extravagant propositions, that their cabinet must either be crazy, or must suppose me to be devoid of reason. The proposition that has been made to me is so flattering that it is almost incredible.’

“ I presume, then, that you doubt its sincerity ?”



“ ‘ By no means ! The fact is, they have proposed, as a first condition, that I should recall the Bourbons, . . . . that I should acknowledge as King the boy Louis XVII, and that I should be Regent.’

“ Strange enough ! And what would they gain by their King Louis XVII ?”

“ ‘ Not much ! He is no favourite with them. They have not much confidence in him, which leads me to suspect he has more merit than is usually attributed to him. The English cabinet will not acknowledge him in his regency. You know that Austria refused to give him the title of King as long as Marie-Antoinette lived. Only imagine me Regent, under the pretended supremacy of a puppet, and in the face of the Jacobins and aristocrats ? I should not retain the post for a single day.’

“ How could they presume to make such a proposition ? . . . What security did they offer you ? for certainly you required some.”

“ ‘ Oh ! as to that, handsome offers were not wanting. They proposed to attach me to the young King by such ties as would render his defence a family duty on my part.’

“ Infamous !” I exclaimed, roused by an irrepressible feeling of indignation. “ Do they not know that the thing is impossible ?”

“ ‘ Not physically,’ replied Robespierre, in a tone of marked dissatisfaction.

“ Perhaps not physically,” I resumed, “ but cer-



tainly morally. You would never consent to such a thing ?”

“ ‘ You have not,’ said he, ‘ a very brilliant imagination. You are not disposed to build castles in the air.’

“ Rather say, castles in the regions below . . . . castles in Pandemonium . . . . Robespierre, hear me ! Be assured that a wall of iron separates you . . . . You understand ?”

“ ‘ I do ! . . . . And the devil take that horde of villains who have made me appear to be a participator in their crimes, though I am really innocent . . . . But, I view the matter as you do . . . . The impossibility staggers me ! . . . . It is a Gordian knot . . . . Yet, it would have been a most desirable arrangement.’

“ Without appearing to observe this last remark, I said :

“ And is this all that was proposed to you ?”

“ ‘ When they found that I refused, on the ground of the irrevocable hatred which I had vowed to Royalty, the envoy declared himself authorised to propose a hereditary Presidency, with the same marriage . . . . This I also rejected. Mr. Serton then suggested something more practicable: viz. twenty years of elective Presidency. This appeared to be honourable and unobjectionable. One might preside temporarily without usurping absolute power. A period of twenty years is not quite three times the duration of the Presidency of



the American government. It would afford the opportunity of effecting a great deal of good.'

" Did you come to any decision ?"

" ' Not yet. . . . Such matters cannot be settled hastily. They must be considered and examined, under every point of view. . . . I probably appear to you very powerful at this moment ; and so I am. . . . My power hangs on public opinion,—on a delusion of terror, on a revolutionary fanaticism which will support me as long as I advance from one extravagance to another. But, I want private supports. I scarcely know a man on whom I can confidently rely. I stand alone. My strength is in myself. It depends on no one.'

" Not on Fleuriot ?"

" ' He ! . . . . a fool ! . . . . a drunkard !'

" Saint-Just, then ?"

" ' A senseless libertine !'

" Well, then, your brother ?"

" ' Oh ! he is a timid creature, and devoid of judgment and everything, except merely our internal affairs. . . . I do not hold a military commission. The want of that trammels all my efforts. A man can never effect a revolution unless he commands bayonets. The instinct of the people is decidedly for liberty. The military are infected with despotism. Those generals will devour us all sooner or later. Look at the Roman Empire. For two or three Emperors elected by the Senate, you may count a hundred imposed by the army.'



“ Then, I presume, you know not what course to adopt.”

“ ‘ I am embarrassed.’

“ And, in sending back the English envoy, you have broken with the London Cabinet.”

“ ‘ I may answer both yes and no. I am urged to make an attempt. It is difficult. I am afraid of compromising myself. All eyes are fixed upon me. My actions are watched and my gestures interpreted. It is most painful to endure this inquisition. Yet, I will make an effort to strike a great blow. I will shew myself to the public in such a way as to command attention. I am well aware, that if I do not show myself, I shall never be able to do anything that will tend to restore to France her repose and happiness.’

“ He next asked me, whether I thought the royalists would be inclined to accommodate themselves to a reasonable government.

“ I am of opinion,” replied I, “ that they will take whatever is offered to them. In the absence of a King, you will see them rally round any one who grasps authority with a firm hand.”

“ Robespierre broke off the conversation, and ordered the coachman to the Rue Saint-Honoré. We soon separated. After I had taken leave of him, I could not help reflecting, with horror, on the marriage which had been proposed. To unite the daughter of the immolated victims to their exe-



cutioner ! The very thought made my blood curdle !

“ On the 18th of June, was celebrated the festival in honour of the Supreme Being. On the previous day, Robespierre sent me a note, requesting that I would attend the ceremony. David, the painter, had designed all the decorations. The festival was held in the garden of the Tuileries. In front of the façade, on an elevated socle, stood the figure of Fanaticism, crowned with the papal tiara, and holding in one hand a torch, and in the other a poignard. Face to face with this figure stood Atheism, which was represented by a blind female, occupied in tearing the book of the law. A mass of combustible matter surrounded the group. Near it was a car of vast magnitude filled with singers and musicians, parading the gardens and chaunting hymns, the poetry of which was in the style of Chenier.

“ An immense crowd thronged the approaches to the amphitheatre, where the members of the Convention were to take their places. They arrived, headed by Robespierre, who wore a blue coat, with a bouquet of tri-coloured flowers. It was remarked that his colleagues did not follow him closely, but at some distance, apparently acknowledging him as sovereign. When I observed this circumstance, I doubted not that Robespierre had prepared everything for striking



the grand blow ; that he would avail himself of that opportunity to proclaim a full amnesty, and annihilate the reign of terror ; and that the people would, in return, raise him to the highest rank in the state.

“ But, I was mistaken. Robespierre had the ambition to do all this ; but not the genius. He delivered a poor speech, which he closed by a most atrocious phrase. This being ended, he applied a match to a train of gunpowder, and the figures of Fanaticism and Atheism were immediately blown up. They were to have been succeeded by the statue of eternal Wisdom, but, owing to some blunder of the mechanists, this statue was blown up along with the other two. This circumstance was regarded as a bad omen, and it gave rise to a good deal of remark.

“ Two days after this, Robespierre called on me.

“ ‘ Well,’ said he, ‘ you see I kept my word, and that I know how to show myself ! What did you think of the manner in which I presided at the festival ? Did I not put myself forward most conspicuously ? The members of the Convention seemed to be merely my escort.’

“ I should rather say that they acted the part of your body guard. But, seriously, I expected something more of you.”

“ ‘ What did you expect ?’

“ A solemn protestation against past crimes :



a speech which would have held out the consolation of a happier future."

" ' You are very wise, truly ! But I can tell you that, had I done as you suggest, I should have been assassinated on the spot. I could read in the looks of the multitude what I had to expect. Therefore, I made my oration somewhat different from what I intended.'

" I understand. You were afraid ; and your own fear caused you to inspire us with fear. This is not the way to succeed."

" ' I am aware it is not. But what can I do ? I tell you once more, I stand alone ; and who knows whether the English are deluding me ? Perhaps their only object is to urge me to an act of imprudence which would compromise me. My destruction would, doubtless, be gratifying to them.'

" Therefore, your new plans are——"

" ' To take revenge on the traitors !' he exclaimed in a voice of fury ; ' To annihilate them all. They surround, they besiege me.....I behold them during the day,—I dream of them during the night. What daggers are pointed against me ! .....what doses of poison prepared !.....Do you know I begin to suspect my most intimate associates. That girl Duplay, for example ;.....I fear she has been bribed. My life is at her mercy. I might——'



“ Here he stopped short.

“ Your position is not an enviable one,” said I.

“ ‘ No, indeed !’ he replied. ‘ May Satan avenge me on him who first drew me into the path which I am now treading ! However, I have returned him ill for ill. But for him . . . but for him—’

“ He said no more. I regarded him as a man marked by the finger of God. I never saw him again ;—the 9th Thermidor speedily followed.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I returned to Prince Cambacérès, the above historical fragment, of which, by his permission, I kept a copy, he made the following observations :—

“ There is no fact in our fatal history, more positively certain, than the allurements held out to Robespierre of his marriage with an august and unfortunate Princess, who was totally ignorant of the infamous traffic in which her name was involved. Robespierre went so far as to visit the illustrious captive in her prison. He represented himself as a municipal officer, and assumed the pretence of making an official visit. He declared himself quite enchanted with the Princess, though he had not presumed to speak to her, so completely was he overawed by the dignity of her looks and manners. But, she was not the only Princess of the blood-royal of France whom Robespierre contemplated the possibility of marrying.



I will relate to you a story which I heard from the mouth of Tallien himself, who, I have no doubt, would repeat it to you, unless he might think it dangerous to do so, in the present position of affairs. The story is this :

“ Robespierre, at the very outset, even on the first creation of the Constituent Assembly, directed his attention to the Duke of Orleans, and sought to make him King. But, in proportion as the revolution was consolidated, the Duke lost the advantages of his position. He had not the energy requisite for seizing the chances which presented themselves, and turning them to the best account. He, therefore, was thrust back and lost in the crowd, whilst Robespierre daily gained ground in the public opinion. The consequence was what was naturally to be expected; namely: the importance of the Duke declined, and he was no longer regarded as the leader of a party.

“ The King’s trial did a great deal of injury to the Duke; whilst, on the contrary, Robespierre gained, at that time, a vast accession of popularity, which he shared with Marat. To make the Prince a King, a president, or a chief of any kind, in France, was a thing no longer thought of. Nevertheless, many continued attached to him, and, as it was possible that his name might yet be serviceable, his co-operation was not to be despised. It was even probable that the Robespierrists, if



united with the Orleanists, would acquire the greater ascendancy, inasmuch as all the distinguished generals of that period were inclined to side with the Duke.

“ After shrewdly considering the circumstances which I have explained, Robespierre conceived his plan. A constitution was to be given to France, and two presidents were to be established ; one for the war department or for foreign affairs, the other for the civil or home department. The first of these two posts, was to be assigned to the man who should be chosen by the majority of the people ; and the second, to be filled by Robespierre. But, with the view of consolidating this arrangement, and of blending the interests of these two chiefs imposed on the Republic, Robespierre, by virtue of a pretension equally insane and arrogant, demanded as a pledge, the hand of the Princess, the sister of the Duke of Chartres. This was his *ultimatum*.

“ This proposition was broached by Couthon. The Duke of Orleans required a few days to reflect upon it. He immediately dispatched a confidential person to his eldest son with the circumstance. There is every reason to believe that the Duke de Chartres returned a negative answer.

“ Dumouriez, who was of course consulted, had also formed his plan, which this proposition was calculated to thwart. He hoped to conduct his aid-de-camp to the throne of Louis XVI by



another path. On the day appointed, the Duke of Orleans sent for Couthon, and told him, with affected chagrin, that his daughter's inclinations were opposed to the marriage, and that, moreover, it would be dangerous to think of it before the execution of the plan in which he was so deeply interested. The Prince concluded by observing, that the constitution must first be proposed, then accepted, and that every thing else would become easy.

“ This was a refusal ; and Robespierre was furiously offended. However, as he saw that his fortune was secure, if connected with that of the Orleans branch of royalty, he made a new effort. He knew that I was on a footing of intimacy with the Prince, and he sent for me. He alleged that the Prince himself had been the first to express a wish for the alliance ; and he commissioned me to point out to him the advantageous results of a consent, and the danger of a refusal. I was to commence with promises, and to end with threats.

“ I acquitted myself of this unpleasant errand ; though not to the satisfaction of Robespierre. The Duke of Orleans did not take much pains to conceal from me his unconquerable repugnance to his proposed son-in-law. On this occasion, he behaved as became a Prince of the blood. He turned a deaf ear to all considerations, advantageous or otherwise, which I submitted to him. When I informed Robespierre of the result



of my mission, he became furiously enraged, and vowed to avenge the affront by the destruction of all the royal family—an object to which he thenceforth devoted himself. It is known how he constrained Dumouriez to raise the mask, and how he forced the Duke de Chartres to seek refuge in the ranks of the enemy, whilst measures were taken at home to arrest his father.

“ After the Duke of Orleans was conducted to Marseilles, Robespierre signified to him that his fate might yet be arrested if he would retract his refusal to the proposed marriage. The Prince’s reply was again in the negative. Then, the vengeance of Robespierre knew no bounds, and he resolved to hurry the death of the man whom he wished to make his father-in-law. When the Duke of Orleans was conducted to Paris to undergo the sentence of execution, I was commissioned to convey to him a final proposal; and I solemnly protest, before God and man, that if, at the moment when the *charrette* which conveyed him to the scaffold halted on the Place du Palais-Royal, the Prince had manifested any inclination to yield his consent, the execution would not have taken place. The fact is, that every arrangement had been made for a temporary insurrection, to afford the means of saving him. This was the cause of the mysterious delay of nearly an hour, in the advancement of the fatal *charrette*. But his Royal Highness, who manifested so much firm-



ness throughout his trial, gave no sign of acquiescence, and Robespierre suffered him to mount the scaffold.

“Such,” pursued Cambacérès, “is the story which I have heard related by Tallien. I believe it to be strictly true, with the exception, perhaps, of that which relates to the scheme for rescuing the Prince. That would have exposed Robespierre to great peril; and he was too much of a poltroon to hazard his safety so far.”

To the above observations of Prince Cambacérès, I may add, that a few days after he had related the story to me, I spoke of it to Tallien. The latter positively declared it to be true, and his declaration was made in the presence of witnesses.



## CHAPTER IV.

The Duke of Otranto—Police disclosures—A lady of quality in the pay of the police—Snare laid to entrap the Polignacs—A gang of thieves betrayed—Love and Police—A mysterious billet—Fouché's rendez-vous—The discreet porter—Discovery of murders committed by the Countess Polvère—Poison and somnambulism—The double lady, an optical phenomenon—The General and the Pilgrim—The brigands and the crucifix—Singular vision of Louis-Sebastian Mercier—Apparition seen by Napoleon and Josephine.

I met the Duke of Otranto only twice or thrice during my visits to Prince Cambacérès in 1814. He was gay, and satirical, and he ridiculed, with unsparing severity the conduct of the public men of the time. But, on this latter subject, all his friends expressed themselves with equal freedom. I was frequently astonished to hear these men of the Empire relate, without reserve, the secret and even dangerous anecdotes of the era they had just closed. I should have expected they would have been more guarded.



One might almost have imagined the restoration had been separated by the lapse of a century from the Empire and the Republic, and that all the actors and witnesses of their anecdotes were no more; whilst, on the contrary, they were all living and on terms of intimacy with them.

The Duke of Otranto, however, who did not consider his career at an end, was somewhat more reserved than the others: but even he related many facts which, had I been in his place, I should have kept to myself. Among this number is the following. I give it in Fouché's own words, merely suppressing the names, which the narrator did not think it necessary to conceal.

“ In the exercise of my official duties, I gave audiences of various kinds: I had even several places out of my hotel, where I received those timid persons, who were alarmed at the name of the police, though they had no objection to accept its pay. At these places, I often had interviews with persons, male and female, of different ages and conditions. Some came on foot, others in their carriages; some disguised, and others in their own characters. On one occasion, when I was at my little political establishment, in the Rue Saint-Louis, then called the Rue de Turenne, a lady was announced.

“ A young and pretty female presented herself. I received her with all possible politeness. She gave me her name; and I then recollected that I



knew something,—I may say a good deal—of her. Her mother, (or as she was styled her aunt) a lady of quality, had been a pensioner of mine since a very remote period. She had been well known in the government offices since the time of M. de M....., but at that period she performed other functions besides supplying information to the police.

“ Her pretty niece, now deputed to me, commenced by narrating her history. Young as she was, she had suffered numerous misfortunes, for you know that all the spies of our police, are the most unfortunate set of people in the world: in short, the young lady had her sorrows, and her wants, and no fortune. Her aunt had assured her that I would treat her with all the kindness of a father; and, in return, she promised that I should know all her secrets, and be made acquainted with all her friends. She received numerous visitors, among whom were imprudent young men, and elderly gentlemen, wanting in reserve. She mentioned to me five or six houses of the old and new régimes, into which I had never yet been able to introduce one of my agents; and to which she promised to open for me a channel of access.

“ Our bargain was speedily concluded:—five hundred francs per month, and a thousand francs at the expiration of a certain number of years, when my young beauty should have acquired sufficient credit and experience.



“ Her first enterprise was directed against M.M. de Polignac. She found means to introduce herself into the *maison de santé* in which they were confined. However, she was not very successful. The two captives received her coolly, and endeavoured to get rid of her ; but she was not easily discouraged : she continued to hover about them, and made such a parade of royalism, that she managed to get possession of an important letter, which supplied me with some valuable information. This letter described a journey in the south, undertaken by a royalist emissary, who named the leaders of the party, their respective capabilities, their position in society, characters, etc. It was quite a treasure.

“ At one of our monthly interviews, my fair emissary thus addressed me :—

“ ‘ Monseigneur, my zeal in your service carries me so far that, for the sake of obliging you, I sometimes condescend to mingle in very bad company : I have now made a valuable discovery.’

“ What is it ?”

“ ‘ A gang of thieves are ravaging, by their depredations, Paris and its environs. If you wish to know their ringleaders and their haunts, here is a note which will help you to find them out.’

“ I took the paper which she presented to me, and, to my inexpressible surprise, I found that it contained a quantity of information, such as could



only have been obtained by the foulest treachery. My rule was never to question my agents, or, as they were called, my *mouches*. I received their disclosures, and that was all. To torment them by wishing to know everything, is only the way to lead them into falsehood. They will not always name their informants ; I never deviated from my rule. When I had some particular reason for knowing every circumstance, then I erected counter-batteries, which I did on the occasion to which I am now referring.

“ I was anxious to know the devices by which my sylph had been enabled to make these discoveries. I sent for the officer who had the *surveillance* of the thieves of Paris, and I stated the case to him. Five days afterwards, I learned that, among the numerous lovers of my lady *mouche*, was one of the most celebrated of our Parisian thieves. This fellow spent one half of his life in the jails, and the other half in the most splendid hotels : he was quite a hero in the annals of crime, endowed with address, courage, and talent ; but so utterly depraved that I could never prevail on myself to employ him.

“ This man, however, being outwitted in some of his dishonest operations by another rogue of his acquaintance, avenged himself by denouncing to me his rival and his comrades. It is gratifying to see wolves reciprocally devouring each other ; and I availed myself of the information received from



F.... until I should have the opportunity of seizing him in his turn.

“About this time, there arrived in Paris a handsome young man of three and twenty years of age, the son of an *émigré* of rank. This young gentleman was known by the assumed name of M. Le Noble. The ostensible object of his visit to Paris was to obtain for his family, who were still absent, the restoration of some unsold estates:—but, in fact, he was a secret agent of Louis XVIII, who had intrusted him with an important mission.

“His evil star led him to visit a certain Viscountess, of whom I shall say nothing, as it would be difficult to say any thing bad enough. Her house was the resort of a great deal of gay company, among whom were jumbled together honest men and swindlers, ladies of respectability, and females of doubtful reputation: in short, all that mixed society which abounds in every great city, and which persons, who are not very cautious or very fastidious, may easily fall into.

“At the parties of this Viscountess, M. Le Noble met my fair *mouche*, and was soon captivated by her attractions. She, at the very first introduction, suspected that he was something better than he seemed to be. She plied him with declarations of the most enthusiastic royalism. Love is credulous: and Le Noble’s passion formed no exception to the rule. He was confiding, and let fall some



hints respecting the real object of his visit to Paris. This disclosure came like a ray of light upon his innamorata. After a regular series of sighs and glances, letters were interchanged. These were, in their turn, followed by assignations. The intimacy at length attracted notice, and incurred the well-feigned displeasure of the lady's aunt.

“ One morning, whilst the rain was pouring in torrents, Le Noble was surprised to hear a knock at the door of his apartment ; but, how much greater was his surprise, when, on opening the door, he beheld the *mouche* breathless with agitation, and almost dissolved in tears !—Exclamations and questions rapidly succeeded each other.

“ ‘ How ! . . . . Is it possible ? . . . . Can it be you ?’

“ ‘ It is . . . . I am lost . . . . undone ! . . . . And I know no one to whom I can fly for protection but you.’

“ ‘ What means this ? . . . . What has happened ?’

“ ‘ Alas ! my aunt has broken open my desk and discovered your letters . . . . I feared to encounter her anger . . . . and I have fled from home !’

“ ‘ Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle ! what is to be done ? You know I have not deceived you. From the first moment of our acquaintance, I told you, candidly, that I was not my own master—that I should compromise the interests of august in-



dividuals were I to attach myself to France by a marriage which, under other circumstances, would constitute my utmost happiness, and concentrate all my affections.'

" ' I know it, dear Le Noble, the fault is all my own ; and I will not require you to do any thing which may compromise your honour. I only conjure you to call on the Commander de Châteauneuf, who is my aunt's particular friend ; ask him to go to her and appease her anger. From thence, I should wish you to go to the Vicomtesse, and implore her to receive me, in case my aunt should prove inexorable. You can stay with the Vicomtesse until you hear the result of the Commander's intercession, and then you can all three come here and tell me my fate.'

" Poor Le Noble, distracted between love and despair, and generously reproaching himself for all the mischief, flew to execute the orders of the distressed damsel. You all know the Commander de Châteauneuf. To make himself of importance, is the grand object of his existence ; and he was very anxious to do anything to serve me. I had sent one of my agents to give him a hint of the part he was to play. He entered into a long conversation with Le Noble on the subject of his unfortunate attachment ; expressed regret, evinced indecision, and, at length, took up his hat and went out. He accompanied Le Noble as far as the house of the Vicomtesse, where he left him,



and proceeded on his embassy to the young lady's aunt.

“ Le Noble, though seated in conversation with the Vicomtesse, counted the moments of the Commander's absence. The clock struck twelve. The lady endeavoured to amuse her visitor ; but, his heart and his thoughts were at home. Half past twelve arrived, and the Commander appeared. The aunt was appeased. She had listened to reason ; and now all that remained was, to announce the grateful tidings to the lovely niece. The Vicomtesse retired to get her hat and shawl. This occasioned some little additional delay, and, at two o'clock, Le Noble returned to his lodgings, distressed to think of the anxiety which his fair visitor must have suffered during his absence.

“ Little did he suspect, that he had no sooner left his house, than a host of searchers, locksmiths, cabinet makers, decyphers of handwriting, etc. had been admitted to his apartments: that his desk, his drawers, even the bed, the curtains and every article of furniture had undergone a rigorous examination. Full powers, credentials, diplomatic notes, and directions indicating where other important papers were to be found, all fell into the hands of my agents, either in copies or extracts ; and it was known where to find the originals, if necessary.

“ It was to accomplish this object, that the



scheme had been devised for getting Le Noble out of the way. By this means, we avoided the odium which would have attended a forcible seizure of the papers; and nothing occurred to excite the least attention or curiosity on the part of the other inmates of the hotel. My agents, who had taken the precaution of stationing in the street numerous scouts, departed at least half an hour before Le Noble returned. He found the young lady, as he had left her, bathed in tears; but the assurance of her aunt's forgiveness consoled her, and she departed, with many protestations of eternal fidelity. Next day, the police paid a formal visit to Le Noble. He was arrested. The evidence of his guilt was undeniable. He was tried on the two-fold charge of being a spy, and of being engaged in a plot for assassinating the Emperor. He was found guilty of both crimes, condemned and executed."

On hearing this terrible *dénouement*, we all uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Surely, gentlemen," said the Duke of Otranto, "it is a very false kind of sympathy which urges you to feel a deeper interest for the assassin, than for his victim. The young man whose story I have just narrated, was a Ravailac, an Ankerstroem, and he well deserved his fate."

"Yet," observed I, "the means employed to obtain his conviction were base and treacherous."



"How! would you rather see the crime perpetrated, than take measures to prevent it by revealing the design of the criminal."

"But, Monseigneur, your pretty *mouche* was a downright monster."

"Oh! as to her, I am quite willing to consign her to your tender mercy. She is now a furious royalist. She goes to the Tuileries, has interviews with Count de Blacas, cajoles the Duke de Richelieu and denounces me . . . . But I see," pursued the ex-minister, "that my story has saddened you. I will tell you another, which though, perhaps, not more cheering, is certainly more extraordinary."

"One day, I received a letter from a lady..the perfume and the manner in which it was folded, assured me that it was a lady's letter. The writer implored me not, indeed, to go in person, (that was a thing not to be expected,) but to send some trustworthy person, who possessed my entire confidence. An affair of the utmost importance was to be communicated to me; but the writer distinctly added that it was nothing of a political nature."

"I confess that this note excited my curiosity; and, though at the risk of compromising the gravity of my official character, I felt inclined to enter upon the adventure, especially as a very trustworthy and confidential person was required. I determined to go, and in such a garb as would



preclude the chance of my being recognised :—I have oftener than once disguised myself so as to defy the recognition of even my intimate acquaintance.

“ The place of *rendez-vous* was a house in the humble Rue de la Montagne-Saint-Genevieve. I dressed myself in a violet-coloured coat, a dark blue velvet waistcoat, small clothes of black kerseymere, and black silk stockings, shoes with silver buckles, a three-cornered cocked hat, and a *frisure à l'ancien régime*. I stepped into a fiacre, from which I alighted at the top of the Rue des Fosses-Saint-Victor, and, having cautiously posted my vedettes, I hurried on to the place of my destination. The house had a *porte-cochère*, a small court-yard, a vestibule and a large staircase. It was evidently the old residence of a person of opulence . . . . probably a member of the *ancienne robe* . . . . indeed, the signature of the letter, was a name which had been associated with the parliament of Paris.

“ I inquired for Madame de Polvere.

“ ‘ The young lady, or the dowager?’ said the servant.

“ This question embarrassed me, and I hesitated for a moment ; but, immediately recollecting the little perfumed billet, I answered promptly and confidently—the young lady.

“ ‘ Step up stairs to the first floor, and knock at the great door facing the staircase.’



“ And where does the dowager reside ?” inquired I, anxious to gain all the information I could.

“ ‘ On the ground floor, in the apartments looking to the garden ; that is to say, when she is in Paris, but she is now at her country seat.’

“ Oh ! . . . . yes . . . it is . . . . near . . . .”

“ ‘ Near Beauvais . . . . perhaps you have been at the château, Sir ?’

“ No . . . but I know the place well. I maintained this colloquy with an old man, who looked as if he united in himself the three-fold dignities of porter, butler and gardener. “ And how is monsieur ?” said I pursuing my interrogatories.

“ ‘ Do you mean the Baron, or monsieur his father ?’

“ Oh both ! . . . . . both !”

“ ‘ The Count is with madame at . . . . and the young Baron has not yet returned from his journey.’

“ And are all the rest well ?”

“ ‘ Alas, Sir ! we lost, about six months ago, the old demoiselle Desrivières, the Count’s sister, a most pious lady, who was so very good herself, that she was scandalized at our wickedness, and was always telling us that we were doomed to eternal punishment. It was a great relief to all the house, when it pleased Heaven to take her . . . . As to the Commander, he enjoys a green old age, at eighty. Monsieur Jules, the Baron’s brother, is



with the army, and their sister, Madame de Melmire, is separated from her husband.'

"Bah ! is it possible !"

" ' Bless me, Sir, don't you know it.... From the way in which you questioned me, I supposed you were quite intimate with the family.'

" I have just returned from India."

" ' *Sainte Vierge !* that is a great way off.... Well, monsieur, then, since you don't know it I will tell you, that the Countess has done a great deal of mischief... the young couple have quarrelled and parted.... One morning, Madame de Melmire came down stairs with her cheek swollen and her mouth bleeding.... a *soufflet !*' The rest of the secret was whispered in my ear.

" Perfectly satisfied with the information I had gleaned, I wished the discreet porter good morning, and made my way to the door to which I had been directed. The staircase was hung with portraits of parliamentary presidents; and the anti-chamber was graced with a few dusty portraits of some of the venerable ancestors of the family. A young and blooming *soubrette* inquired my name. I gave her some name or other, no matter what, and added that I had brought an answer to the letter written by the Baroness to the lady on the Quai Malaquais.

" Five minutes afterwards, I was ushered into the drawing-room, the furniture of which seemed to take its date from the year 1750. In this old-



fashioned apartment, I beheld a beautiful female, about five and twenty years of age; graceful, simple, modest and timid. As I advanced to make my bow to her, I observed that she was agitated and trembling.

“ Madam,” said I presenting her note, “ I am sent by his excellency the minister of....”

“ A supplicating look closed my mouth, and I stopped short.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said the lady, ‘ nothing but the most urgent reasons could have induced me....how much I am obliged to his excellency....I will endeavour to prove my gratitude....Indeed I am very unfortunate !’

“ Madam, I enjoy the full confidence of the minister. He will decide according to my report. As far as I can judge at present, it is likely to be favourable.

“ ‘ I feel the importance of the step I have taken. Perhaps, after all, I have taken it too precipitately....but I confess I had not sufficient heroism to brave the commission of another crime.’

“ A crime !”

“ ‘ Alas, Sir, your surprise overwhelms me....I shall never have courage to proceed.’

“ Compose yourself, Madam, I entreat and tell me all. It is your duty....and, after what I have heard, it is my duty to urge you to make a full and candid disclosure.”

“ ‘ I will do so,’ replied the lady raising her pale



face . . . . ' but it must be on condition that what I am about to communicate shall be enveloped in profound secrecy . . . . will you promise this ?'

" I pledged myself to receive the disclosure on the condition of secrecy. In cases of emergency, I often found it indispensable to make these promises, in order to stimulate confidence. In so doing, I conceived that I was promoting the ends of justice. The integrity of a police minister must be general, and not particular. He is justifiable in breaking his promise to an individual for the sake of the public good. I never should have hesitated to have made a promise of secrecy, for the sake of obtaining a disclosure of an intended robbery or murder ; but, I should not have considered myself bound to keep my promise to the robber or the murderer, to the prejudice of his victim : that would have been a strange perversion of the point of honour. Guided, therefore, by what I conceived to be the just principle of my duty, I gave the lady my promise of secrecy.

" ' I am satisfied,' said the Baroness de Polvere. ' Now you shall hear the story which I have to reveal . . . . My husband is the representative of an ancient and noble family, several members of which have, at various times, discharged high judicial functions. The distinction which the family has long enjoyed has imbued my mother-in-law with so high an idea of importance, that the fear of seeing it without an heir, has thrice urged



her to the commission of a horrible crime. This lady is not our countrywoman. She is a native of the Greek islands, where her husband married her during one of his voyages : he was an officer in the navy, having thrown aside the judicial robe of his ancestors, to fight the battles of his country. My mother-in-law, as I have already observed, has conceived such an extravagant veneration for the house of Polvere, that its perpetuity is the sole object which engrosses her thoughts. She has two sons, of whom my husband is the elder. The younger, who is a captain of artillery, was married five years ago. His wife, at the expiration of the fourth year of her marriage, died and you shall hear in what way.

“ ‘ My husband, before he attained his majority, married his first cousin, to whom he was ardently attached. Four years elapsed. Their union was still unblessed by progeny ; and the unfortunate lady suddenly died. The Baron de Polvere, whilst still overwhelmed with affliction, suffered himself to be dragged to the altar a second time, in compliance with his mother’s urgent entreaties. His second wife, my intimate friend, was a beautiful and amiable woman. She also proved childless, and, like the first wife, died suddenly about four years after her marriage. Nearly at the same time, I lost my husband. He left me with two lovely children, a boy and girl who are now the sole sources of my happiness.

“ ‘ Some time after I had become a widow, the



Countess proposed a union between me and her son. To me she urged her proposition with unremitting perseverance, and dwelt with unbounded eulogy on the many amiable qualities of the Baron. Our mutual bereavements led to a mutual sympathy, and we gradually became persuaded that life would be more agreeable if passed in one another's society. We were married about four years ago, and the two little angels, the fruit of my first marriage, are still my only children.

“ ‘ My mother-in-law's affection for me rapidly chilled, in proportion as she relinquished her hope of my presenting an heir to the family. Her ill-humour not only rendered me miserable, but was intolerable to every one of the family. She has caused a separation between her younger son and his wife, and, by representing that my brother-in-law was shewing improper attentions to me, she has raised a barrier of dissension between her two sons. But even this conduct, odious as it is, is innocent in comparison with the crimes of which she is guilty.

“ ‘ When she quitted Greece, to come to France, she brought with her, a female servant, or rather a slave, who was present at her birth. This woman, whose name is Panchiera, and who is no less malignant and ill-tempered than her mistress, fell ill about six months ago. Her disorder was of so infectious a nature that no one could approach her without danger. Every one fled from her, even the Countess, whose imprudence in thus



abandoning her can only be accounted for by the apparent certainty of Panchiera's approaching end.

“ ‘ I alone,’ continued the lady, blushing to tell of her own goodness, ‘ I alone obeyed the precept set down in the Holy Gospel. I discharged, day and night, at the bed-side of the miserable invalid, the duties which religion imposes on us. The gratitude she manifested for my attentions, roused the jealousy of her imperious mistress, who vented upon her all the bitterness of her displeasure. Panchiera became convalescent, to the surprise of every one, even of the doctors who were prescribing for her ; and the circumstance was attributed wholly to my attentions. However, after the lapse of a day or two, an unaccountable change took place. Panchiera's disorder manifested the most fatal symptoms ;—her death was pronounced to be inevitable.

“ ‘ Worn out with watching, and assured that all further attendance on the patient must be unavailing, I retired to bed. It happened to be my mother-in-law's *fête* day, and she went to hear mass at Saint-Etienne-du-Mont. On leaving home, she gave strict orders that no one should enter the chamber of Panchiera, whom she supposed to be in the agonies of death. But no sooner had the Countess crossed the threshold of the door, than Panchiera sent to me Pauline, (the girl who shewed you in just now) to entreat that I would go to her immediately, as the pre-



servation of my life depended on her speaking to me before she breathed her last.

“ ‘ Pauline, in breathless haste, delivered to me the message, and I immediately rose and hurried to the chamber of the dying woman. The Greek then related to me some extraordinary particulars which I will briefly communicate to you.

“ ‘ My mother-in-law, who has been from her childhood acquainted with the secret of preparing deadly poison, has availed herself of this art to terminate the existence of two of her son’s wives, who had proved childless. I too am to pay the forfeit of my life if, in the course of the present year, I do not present my husband with an heir. Panchiera wound up this horrible disclosure by adding that, in spite of her gratitude for my attentions, she could never have determined to warn me of my danger, but that her mistress, fearing her indiscretion, had administered to her a poisonous draught, of the effects of which, she was then dying.

“ ‘ I die’ said the Greek, ‘ not of my disorder, but by her malice. This is the recompence of my faithful services. Alas ! mutual crimes are never a security between two criminals.’

“ ‘ The wretched woman furnished me with abundance of information in corroboration of her statement. She described to me the seals which closed the bottles containing the fatal powders and liquors, and she, moreover, gave me the receipt of an



infallible antidote against poison. She then bade me farewell, and entreated that I would leave her, lest I should excite the suspicion of my mother-in-law. I returned to my own apartment, and I had not finished my prayers, when the Countess returned from mass. She immediately flew to the chamber of the old Greek. She found her in the agonies of death, with the rattles in her throat. A confessor was sent for ; but, before he arrived, the soul of Panchiera had fled from its mortal abode, and was arraigned at that tribunal at which we must all sooner or later render our account.

“ ‘ My mother-in-law was but little grieved at a loss which she might have been expected to feel deeply. Every one in the house was astonished at her indifference, except Pauline and myself. A week elapsed, and, at the expiration of that time, I had sufficiently recovered my self-command to brave the scrutinizing gaze of the Countess. Nevertheless, I feared her, and was constantly in dread of some attempt on my life. As a first precaution, I thought it advisable to feign pregnancy, and, at the same time, I sent a note to one of the first apothecaries in Paris, requesting him to make up the antidote of which I furnished the receipt.

“ ‘ One morning, about a fortnight ago, the Countess came to my chamber. I observed that she was pale and agitated. She had in her hand a



little box, carefully wrapped up in a piece of green paper . . . . You see, Sir, I am acquainting you with the most minute particulars.'

" You are right, Madam, replied I, for my curiosity was highly excited by her story, which every moment became more and more interesting. By this sort of precision, long and fruitless legal details are frequently avoided. But pray proceed.

" ' Well Sir,' resumed the Baroness, ' as soon as I observed the form of the box, and the peculiar way in which the envelope was put round it, I was seized with alarm and inquietude. But I summoned sufficient presence of mind to repress my feelings, and I waited calmly to hear what my mother-in-law wished to say to me.

" ' My dear child,' she said, in the kindest tone of voice she could assume, ' I am almost disposed to be angry with you. Is it possible that the respect you owe me, the reciprocal affection existing between us, the title of daughter which I felt such happiness in conferring on you—have not rendered you proof against the insinuations of that creature, Panchiera. That vile woman cherished a guilty attachment for my poor husband, for the space of forty years. She was the cause of great unhappiness to me, and she practised upon me a thousand odious deceptions. You knew nothing of this ; but, nevertheless, you have been much too credulous. Why not have disclosed the whole to me immediately ? My candid



explanation would have banished all distrust from your mind.'

" I listened with profound attention. Every word which fell from my mother-in-law, served to guide me in the course I was to pursue. I could not but wonder at the artful scheme she had planned for her defence ; plausibly accusing Panchiera, whom she suspected of having accused her ; and then the well-feigned kindness of her manner was calculated to banish every doubt of her sincerity. At length, she paused, and I saw that a prompt reply would be more satisfactory than silence.

" Really, Madam," said I, with a forced smile, " your imagination appears to have taken a strange flight. I know nothing of any secrets that may have existed between Panchiera and you....I know no——"

" ' Stay, child, you may spare yourself a violation of truth. This box, which was brought here by an apothecary's lad, was delivered to me by mistake, under the supposition that I was the person who had ordered it. It contains an infallible antidote against the effects of poison. The secret of compounding it was heretofore known in France to two persons only. One is now no more. God rest her soul, deeply as she has injured me ! The other person is myself. The secret is now divulged to the world.'



“ And where is the harm, Madam, if the disclosure be beneficial to mankind ?”

“ ‘ It was a family treasure. In the event of any reverse of fortune, this secret would have been a sure source of wealth to us. I certainly have reason to complain of being thus robbed of that which was my rightful property.’

“ Could I have imagined —— ?

“ ‘ You ought to have reposed confidence in your second mother ; instead of which, you have given credit to odious allegations and calumnies.’

“ I retained my presence of mind, and cautiously concealed my secret. In vain did my mother-in-law try every stratagem to put me off my guard. I continued mute. The Countess complained bitterly, and, finding that she could extort nothing from me, she went in quest of my waiting maid, Pauline. The poor girl, being taken by surprise, and closely pressed by the artful interrogatories of the Countess, confessed that Panchiera, shortly before her death, had requested to see me, and that I had had an interview with her ; but that she (Pauline) knew nothing of what had passed between us.

“ Thus, by a mixture of truth and falsehood, Pauline mitigated the sort of moral torture under which my mother-in-law was suffering, whilst, at the same time, it did not diminish her anxiety. Pauline came to me afterwards to beg pardon



for her imprudence. I was very sorry for what she had said ; and I felt it the more necessary to hold myself on the defensive.

“ My husband, his brother, their father and their uncle are all absent in the country. About six days ago, my mother-in-law paid me a visit. She had not spoken to me since the scene of which I have just related to you the particulars, except perhaps when we were seated at our meals, and just for the sake of keeping up appearances to the servants. On entering my apartment, she said to me :

“ ‘ My dear daughter, is it possible that you can still believe me to be guilty of the crime of murder ?’

“ I declared that such a supposition was the most distant from my mind.

“ ‘ Come, come,’ said she, ‘ confess the truth . . . .I know all. Pauline evinces the candour which you ought to observe ; whilst you maintain that silence which would be justifiable only in her.’

“ Piqued by this comparison, I said : Madam, you have laboured so hard to excite suspicion, that I presume Pauline conceived she was obliging you.

“ ‘ Confess all you know ; then perhaps——’

“ What ?

“ ‘ You do not know me. I am not like you, a frivolous Frenchwoman. The perpetuation of my family is the object dearest to my heart.



There is nothing which I would not sacrifice to it.... We may arrange this matter.... A childless marriage may be dissolved.'

" Ah, Madam ! I exclaimed, what a confession has escaped you !

" " And you, also, it would appear have been thrown off your guard ; for, since you attach this double meaning to my words, I can easily guess to what you wish to make them apply.'

" I saw my mistake, and remained silent. My mother-in-law left me. She was evidently much irritated. That same evening, I went to pay a visit to a lady of my acquaintance. I returned home about midnight. Pauline sat up for me in the porter's room. She was preparing to light me up stairs when, on passing my mother-in-law's apartment, which was on the ground floor, we saw the door opened. To our infinite astonishment, my mother-in-law came out of the room in her night dress, and holding a lighted candle in her hand. She advanced towards us, and I became alarmed, expecting some violent scene. But what was our amazement to see her glide past us gently and ascend the staircase?

" Is she walking in her sleep ? I mentally ejaculated. She is, ...there can be no doubt of it. Where can she be going ? We followed her. She ascended to the first story, and, without stopping, proceeded to the story above. There is then a wider stair case leading to the attics,



which she ascended, we still following her. She passed through the corridor communicating with the chamber of the deceased Panchiera. She had the key of this room, which we had not previously perceived. Having unlocked the door, she entered, and advanced to the further end of the room, where we saw her draw aside the tapestry. Behind the tapestry there was a panel, which opened like a door, forming a sort of closet, and we saw within it several bottles and earthen vases containing liquids. My mother-in-law took one of the bottles in her hand, examined it closely, holding it between her and the candle, and, with a malignant smile, she said :

“ ‘ She will not survive this ! ’ ”

“ ‘ She then closed the panel and drew the tapestry together. We stepped softly into a corner of the corridor. Having carefully locked the door, she proceeded down stairs with a firm step. I followed her as far as my own apartment, into which I flew to conceal myself. I was almost bewildered at what I had witnessed. Pauline remained with me all night. This morning, my mother-in-law has departed for her country seat. She set off early without seeing me ; but she left a kind and urgent invitation for me to follow her. Ah ! by so doing, I should consign myself to a certain and horrible death. ”

“ ‘ This affair almost deprives me of reason. I



know not what course to pursue. I cannot prevail on myself to compromise my husband's family; and yet I know not by what other means I can secure my own safety. In this dilemma, I thought of appealing to the aid of our Minister of Police. The time is approaching when I must either join my mother-in-law, or come to an open rupture with her, by explaining the grounds of my refusal. I, therefore, determined to address myself to the Duke of Otranto, and I wrote that letter, which you have brought with you.'

"You may easily conceive, gentlemen," pursued Fouché, "that I listened with deep interest to this extraordinary statement. The lady, whose name I have not mentioned, (that by which I have designated her, being fictitious,) related the story in so artless and simple a manner, that every word bore the impress of truth. I endeavoured to console her, and to banish her alarm by the assurance that the Duke of Otranto would do every thing requisite to ensure her safety. I subjected the waiting maid to a rigid examination; and the result was, that every word of her evidence confirmed the statement of her mistress. I made a visit to the chamber which had been occupied by the deceased Greek servant, and I examined the tapestry and the panel. The latter opened by a secret spring, which, however, was easily discovered, and I then saw the bottles and jars filled with the deleterious substances. Having



explored as far as I thought requisite, I took my leave of the lady, promising that in less than eight and forty hours, the affair should be settled.

“ I went straight to the Emperor, and related the whole to him.

“ ‘ Let that wicked old woman be immediately arrested and brought to trial,’ said he.

“ Sire, that would bring disgrace on an honourable family.

“ ‘ Would you leave such atrocious crimes unpunished ?’

“ Certainly not ; but this is a case in which one of the measures of the old régime might be revived with good effect. Let the old Countess be imprisoned for life. I unfolded the plan to Napoleon, and he approved it. Next day, the criminal was conveyed to a state prison, on a charge of conspiracy. Her husband and her children came to me to intercede in her behalf. I told them the truth, and produced my evidence. They said no more ; proof is an orator which no power can resist. The Countess was not deceived as to the cause of her arrest, and, shortly after her imprisonment, she procured a dose of poison, and died blaspheming Providence. I congratulated myself on having averted the scandal of this affair, whilst at the same time justice was satisfied.”

We all expressed our amazement at this strange story ; and even ventured to manifest some doubt



of the possibility of such an atrocious character as the Countess.

“ I could relate,” said the Duke of Otranto, “ a hundred incidents no less extraordinary, which have come within my knowledge. What would you think of a beautiful young female appearing double ?”

“ Double, Monseigneur ! double in character you mean ?”

“ No, double in body ! . . . . Two beings precisely similar, were seen at the same time in different parts of her father’s house, and in other places. The fact rests on the evidence of thirty individuals of unquestionable veracity, whose signatures are affixed to the inexplicable *procès-verbal* of the case. The Emperor, after holding a long conference with Corvisart on the subject, desired that the phenomenon should be enveloped in the utmost possible secrecy. He presented, from his own privy purse, a sum of money to the young lady, accompanied by the request that she would retire to an obscure convent. In that convent, she died on the 1st of January, 1813. The optical illusion of which she was the subject, existed for more than ten years.”

At this, we all laughed, declaring that the Duke was taxing our credulity too far.

“ Well,” resumed Fouché, “ perhaps you will be less sceptical respecting the adventures of



robbers. I will relate to you a history which, at least, has the merit of novelty, for I have never yet communicated it to any one.

“ At the period to which my story refers, the Reign of Terror was just at its close. About midway between Berry and Sologne, there was an old château, the owners of which had suffered severely in the revolution. Having saved, from the wreck, scarcely anything but their lives, they were endeavouring, by economical retirement, to recover from the difficulties in which they had been involved, by the ravages committed upon their property. The château was consequently visited by little company, and it never was the scene of those entertainments which too often serve only to allure a crowd of greedy parasites. On the other hand, hospitality was liberally dispensed to a few chosen friends ; the family table was plentifully supplied ; and, what was wanting in ceremony, was made up in abundance.

“ One evening, on the approach of winter, a noise was heard at the outer gate of the castle. It was a general of the Republic, accompanied by his two aides-de-camp. He had been appointed to a command at Châteauroux, and night had overtaken him in the dreary plains of Sologne. He requested to be provided with a supper and a night's lodging.

“ ‘ Shew them in,’ said the master of the château, ‘ they shall be made welcome.’



“The three travellers alighted: their horses were led to the stable, and they were ushered to the salon. Their manners and conversation denoted them to be persons of very low breeding; but this was not thought very extraordinary, considering the want of refinement which characterized Rossignol, Ronsin, Santerre, Henriot and other officers of high rank in the revolutionary party. The mother of the master of the château, a venerable and pious matron, far advanced in years, conceived such a strong prejudice against them, that she immediately retired to her oratory, and fervently prayed that Heaven would not forsake a family which had always been distinguished for religious devotion and attachment to the King.

“Prayer,” pursued Fouché, “administers ease to certain minds. The lady returned to the drawing-room, more calm, and with a less degree of aversion towards the new guests. She scrutinized their slovenly dress, their ferocious countenances; and, when she heard their conversation, which was perfectly in harmony with their appearance, she thought it prudent to consign to their use the best chambers in the manor, lest they should imagine they were not treated with all the respect that was due to them. The visitors withdrew, and they had no sooner left the room, than all the family agreed that their looks alone would afford evidence sufficient for hanging them.

“The family in the château consisted of the



grandmother, the father, the mother, a son about eighteen, two daughters, the one fourteen, and the other sixteen, an aunt, two maid-servants, and two lackeys :—in all, eleven individuals ; but they were ill-armed, and incapable of any effectual resistance.

“ The officers were informed that supper was ready. They came and seated themselves at table. They maintained an arrogant tone of conversation, and were evidently seeking to pick a quarrel. The prudence of the father checked the impetuosity of the son, who, on one occasion, well nigh suffered his irritation to get the better of him.... During supper, a ringing was heard at the gate. The general and his aides-de-camp smiled, and exchanged significant looks, which were observed by some of the family. The master of the house ordered that no one should be admitted.

“ ‘ Very likely,’ observed the general, ‘ it may be two orderly officers, who I expect will be sent with a message to me. Possibly, they may have found out where we are.’

“ To this, no answer could be made ; but the suspicion of the family was aroused. The two men servants were sent to open the gate. They ushered in, not the two orderly officers who were expected, but a man of tall stature and dignified deportment, and whose countenance expressed a singular degree of mildness and benevolence. He was apparently about forty years of age, and his costume was that worn by the pilgrims of Saint-Jacques :



he had the rocket and the staff, the gourds, the cockle shells, and the large oil skin hat ; in short, nothing was wanting. As soon as he entered the threshold of the room door, he stopped short, crossed himself, and said in a firm and grave tone of voice :—

“ ‘ The grace of God be with you, and preserve you from the nocturnal ambush of the wicked ! ’ ”

“ The solemnity of these words, and the singularity of a garb, which, at that time, could not be worn in France without considerable risk and peril, amazed the inmates of the chateau. The good old lady, delighted at the pious salutation, cordially welcomed the pilgrim, whilst the officers sneered at him, called him an impostor and a hypocrite, and said : ‘ Remember the habit does not make the monk. ’ ”

“ ‘ True, ’ replied the pilgrim, ‘ nor does the uniform make the officer. ’ ”

“ At these words, the aides-de-camp rose angrily and were about to strike the pilgrim ; but the others held them back, and he thus continued :

“ ‘ Surely, gentlemen, it would be better if you would employ yourselves in scouring the country of the brigands who infest it, than for two of you to attack a poor wandering sinner. He who threatens with the sword, will perish by the sword. Heaven is weary of crimes that are committed, and will speedily take vengeance on the offenders. ’ ”

“ The remarkable expression, with which he



uttered these words, whilst it imparted confidence to the inhabitants of the château, seemed to intimidate the officers. The General said, in a more subdued tone than he had hitherto maintained :

“ ‘ My friend, that term gentleman, which you make use of, and which is so obnoxious to us, together with those emblems of superstition in which you have arrayed yourself....all augur ill. To-morrow it is very probable you may be called upon to account for your conduct before the municipality of this district.’

“ ‘ It is certain,’ said the pilgrim, ‘ that to-morrow you will have to answer for yourself.’

“ ‘ Villain !’ exclaimed the General. ‘ I will run you my sword through your body !’

“ The family succeeded in appeasing this angry ebullition, and supper proceeded. The pilgrim eat only a crust of bread and a dried fig, and quenched his thirst with a glass of water. His conversation, which was serious and full of the most sublime sentiments, overawed the officers. They observed a gloomy silence, and retired when they saw the family preparing for prayers. They proceeded to their chamber, swearing, singing and jesting.

“ The pilgrim uttered the pious exhortation to heaven. His improvised prayer was sublime. All the family expressed their admiration and gratitude, and the son obliged the holy man to accept his bed, instead of that which had been prepared for him in the servants’ room.



“ The inhabitants of the château were all sound asleep, when, about one o’clock in the morning, the grandmother was awakened by the glare of a brilliant light, which dazzled her. She looked around, and, on recovering from her surprise, she beheld, standing at the foot of her bed, the pilgrim, who by signs directed her to rise, dress herself and follow him. The good old lady, feeling herself, as she afterwards declared, urged by a supernatural power, immediately obeyed. At the same moment, and in the same manner, the pilgrim awoke the son of the master of the château, and conducted him to the corridor, where he was met by his grandmother. For a moment, the pilgrim appeared to them to assume a twofold form, but the effect was so instantaneous that they were unable to give any accurate account of it. The stranger, then, without uttering a word, conducted them to the chamber where the officers were reposing. He touched the door lightly with his staff; it flew open; he entered, and the old lady and her grandson followed him. On the tables and chairs were lying rope ladders, poignards, pistols, keys, files, iron bars, and other things commonly used by robbers. The three pretended officers appeared to be in a profound sleep.

“ They will sleep till to-morrow,” said the pilgrim, “ thanks to Heaven and to the piety of this excellent family.”

“ Having uttered these words, he vanished. .the



light fled with him. . . . the lady and her grandson found themselves enveloped in darkness, and in their respective apartments, instead of being, as they supposed, in the chamber allotted to their guests. The impression left on their minds was so vivid that they could not imagine it to be the mere effect of a dream. Being unable to fall asleep again, they were the first to rise in the morning. When they met, they related to each other their supposed dream or vision, and were mutually struck with the coincidence. The galloping of horses was heard approaching the gate of the château. A party of gendarmerie were in pursuit of three leaders of a formidable troop of brigands. A description of their persons was sent to the young gentleman, and, on perusing it, he observed that it precisely corresponded with that of the three individuals who, on the previous evening, had solicited his father's hospitality. Having stated this circumstance, and mentioned the name which the pretended General assumed, the gendarmes felt assured that they were the men of whom they were in pursuit. Besides, the gendarmes had ascertained that, during the night, the château had been surrounded by a party of robbers, apparently watching for a signal, which was not given.

“The gendarmes proceeded straight to the chamber occupied by the suspicious visitors. They



found the door open, though, on the preceding evening, it was known to have been bolted, and the old lady and her grandson, to their great horror, beheld the rope ladder, pistols, and every thing just as it had been pictured in their dream. The three banditti being roused from a lethargic sleep, offered no resistance. They confessed all, and declared themselves unable to account for the heavy sleep which had overpowered them and prevented them from carrying their plan into execution.

“The family, surprised at not seeing the pilgrim, proceeded to his chamber....He was gone, and no trace of him was ever discovered. On the bed, on which he had evidently not reposed, was found an ivory crucifix of vast size and exquisite workmanship.”

“Ah Monseigneur!” we all exclaimed, when the Duke of Otranto had ended this strange story, “it is one of the results of the restoration that old convent chronicles are regaining credit.”

“Gentlemen,” replied Fouché coolly, “I have had submitted to my perusal, the confession of the three robbers, the evidence of the whole family corroborated by the attestations of the gendarmerie, and of the local and departmental authorities. It is certainly more easy to deny than to believe; but, if we are to withhold credit from facts supported on good evidence, it may as



well be alleged that Tarquin drove Publicola from Rome, and that Cæsar killed Brutus in the Capitol."

Observing that the Duke of Otranto was piqued, we made no further show of our incredulity. There are acts of apparent concession which politeness imperatively demands.

Prince Cambacérès seeing our dilemma, said,—  
“ People are inclined to regard as mere fiction all that does not appear in accordance with the natural order of things ; and yet I wager there is not one of us here present, who cannot relate some extraordinary fact, partaking of the marvellous, which has come within his observation.”

“ That is not my case, I assure you, Monseigneur,” observed I : “ I have never yet witnessed any occurrence which all the world would not admit to be possible. Nevertheless, I will vouch on my honour for the veracity of the person from whom I heard a very marvellous story, which with your permission, I will relate.

“ In 1807 I was on terms of intimacy with an individual who enjoyed a considerable share of literary reputation in France, and whose fame is not unknown, even in foreign countries. I allude to Louis Sebastian Mercier. He was a very eccentric man, singular in every thing, a *hater* (for I must be a neologist like himself in attempting to pourtray his character)—he was a hater of Racine, Homer, Boileau, and Newton. His ideas were full of



originality, and his conversation was exceedingly entertaining.

“Mercier had been a member of the National Convention, but he had not, like many others, withdrawn, leaving his honor behind him. One day, I was in company with him in the green room of the Comédie Française. There were present, besides myself, M. de Cailhava, an enthusiastic admirer of Molière, and Pellettier-Volmerange, the author of some successful melodramas. We were all engaged in animated conversation, and Mercier said :—

“ ‘Gentlemen, I am the person who can give you the latest news of Louis XVI.’

“ ‘You, Mercier,’ we exclaimed, “were you so fortunate as to obtain permission to see him in the Temple?”

“ ‘I have had the pain of seeing him face to face, as I now see you ; and that since his death.’

“ ‘Since the King’s death ?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Impossible.’

“ ‘To you it probably appears so ; for you doubt all things, save such as are witnessed by your own eyes : but, nevertheless,’ pursued he solemnly, ‘I saw Louis XVI revisit this world after his death.’

“ ‘Where ? and at what time ?’ we inquired.

“ ‘On the night of the 21st of January 1794, I



was hurrying through the streets to call on a sick friend, when, as I was crossing the boulevard, I beheld an immense multitude of people thronging towards an object which apparently excited curiosity. It was a carriage, surrounded by guards, together with several pieces of artillery and cannoniers with their matches ready lighted. In the carriage there was seated a man, whom I immediately recognized to be Louis XVI. Having approached near to me, the carriage stopped, and the King beckoned me to advance, I did so, and he said to me:—

“ ‘ You did not vote for my death. For that you may be thankful for the sake of your own peace of mind. I was sacrificed ; and France will dearly pay for shedding the blood, which I should not regret, had it been spilt for her happiness and glory. Most of my assassins will die on the scaffold, or in exile : all will be victims to soul torturing remorse. The government will pass from the hands of one set of tyrants to those of another, until, at length, my family will re-ascend the throne, and close the abyss of revolutions.’ ”

“ Louis XVI, having uttered these words, drew his head within the carriage, which then drove on, leaving me astounded and transfixed to the spot. Gradually, the crowd dispersed, and, having recovered from the stupor into which this incident had thrown me, I proceeded onward to my friend's house.”



“ Or rather,” said I to Mercier, “ you awoke.”

“ ‘ I was not asleep’ he replied. ‘ The circumstance occurred when I was as perfectly awake as I am at this moment. I swear this on the faith of an honest man, and I never yet swore falsely.’

“ This story, gentlemen,” added I, “ I declare on my honor I heard from the lips of Mercier ; and I heard it not only once, but several times. On one occasion, I remember it made a particular impression on me. It was when I breakfasted with him at the Ecu de France, Rue d’Enfer, in company with the Abbé d’Allez, two ladies, the Chevalier Cubières, and Count d’Escherny.”

“ Well,” said Prince Cambacérès, “ I have heard the Emperor relate a circumstance of a very similar nature, which, he affirmed, occurred within his own observation. It was this :—One night, during the height of summer, the heat was excessive, and Napoleon and Josephine were seated in conversation at an open window of the Tuileries. It was late—near midnight. Suddenly, they were startled by the appearance of a red light which illumined the horizon. The imperial couple beheld in the reflection of this red light, a multitude of persons assembled in the parterres of the gardens. They were seized with consternation, and were about to give an alarm ; but the extraordinary silence of the multitude awed and astonished them,



and no one ventured to approach the palace. In the midst of the crowd, a scaffold was raised, covered with red cloth. An executioner and two of his assistants mounted it: they were followed by the person who was about to suffer, and who had his hands tied behind him. The crowd hissed and hooted him; but he ascended with a firm step, and turned to address the populace. What was the amazement of the Emperor and Empress on beholding his features, to recognize those of Napoleon! . . . . Josephine shrieked, and fainted, and, in a moment, the vision vanished. Both the Emperor and Empress concurred precisely in every particular in describing what they had seen, and each related to me the story separately. They were not asleep, and certainly you will not accuse Napoleon of want of firmness."

This anecdote naturally surprised us; and the serious and emphatic manner in which the Prince related it, prevented us from expressing any doubts of its reality. We took it as it was offered to us, and at its conclusion I said to the Prince:—

"Monseigneur, may I venture to ask whether you have ever been witness to any thing apparently supernatural?"

"As yet, I cannot say that I have," replied he. "But wait a little, and, if Heaven should



spare me till another year, then ask me the same question."

I did so, and the Prince granted me his confidence. What he communicated to me, the reader shall learn at the proper time and place.



## CHAPTER V.

The Marquis de Maniban—Remarks on the old French Magistracy—Emoluments and duties of a Parliament Counsellor—The Doyen's mule, a Toulousian anecdote—Opinions respecting the guilt of the Calas family—Victims sacrificed by the Jacobins to revenge Calas—Napoleon's intention of restoring the old Parliaments—His conversation with Cambacérès on that subject—Remarks of the Duke d'Angoulême relative to the old Parliaments—Scheme for a gallant intrigue at the Court of the Tuileries—Base speculations on Napoleon's gallantry—Beautiful reply of the Emperor to a petition of the Empress Josephine—Military anecdotes—Secret mission to England in 1811—Plan for inducing the Bourbons to renounce their claim to the throne of France—Prince Talleyrand's loss of memory—Madame de N....—Unpublished letter of Fouché—Madame de N....'s visit to Hartwell—Her letter to Prince Cambacérès—The Count de La Châtre—The Duke of Orleans—The Count de Blacas—Description of His Majesty Louis XVIII—Père Elysée—The Duchess d'Angoulême—Her charitable disposition—The Duke de Berry—His morganatic marriage—His two daughters—Napoleon's reception of the Royal message—A celebrated remark of Napoleon—Explanation of the occasion on which it was made.

ONE evening, when Prince Cambacérès had a small party of friends, the Marquis de Mani-



ban was present. The Marquis had formerly been a President in the Parliament of Toulouse. He was a man of good family and was distinguished for his intellectual acquirements. The conversation turned on the subject of the old magistracy, its preponderance, the respect in which it was held, and its influence in the scale of the government.

Some one present asked what had been gained by the abolition of the sale of offices.

“ Nothing,” replied the Prince, “ except that intriguing ignorance is enabled the more easily to supersede learning. The venality, as it is termed, was a wise and prudent system. An office was a good inheritance which might be transmitted from father to son, and it was guarded by a heavy pecuniary security. The result of the system was, that a young man from his boyhood devoted himself to the study of our laws and parliamentary forms. Impressed with the dignified station which his father filled in society, he was naturally anxious to maintain it in his own person. He consequently became grave and erudite. He was proof against pecuniary corruption, for he possessed rank, fortune, and supremacy. Such families were the glory of a province ; their names were maintained with pride ; and they were a nucleus, round which a most respectable body could always be assembled. How great is the difference now ! The Magistrate issues from the shop or manu-



factory. He has an eager thirst for money, is determined to amass a great fortune, and is not very nice as to the means of obtaining it. He finds himself an insulated being in the midst of his family, no one member of which stimulates him by example. In our old parliamentary families, on the contrary, the grandfather, father, sons-in-law, uncles, nephews and cousins all wore the robe ; their whole lives were devoted to the courts. They might of themselves have formed a tribunal, or at least a chamber. What a fund of information they possessed, and what a power of applying it to practical use ! If an observation was omitted by one, it was sure to be made by another. If a case had passed through the lower courts, and came to be judged in the last instance by the grand Chamber of the Parliaments of Paris or Toulouse, the decision was as much respected as if it had emanated from heaven. The judgment of those magistrates was so unquestionable, that it was appealed to from all parts of Europe. These extraordinary men rose at four in the morning, and put on their robes of office which they wore until they retired to rest at night. Before seven o'clock, they were assembled in court, where they dispatched an immense quantity of business. From dinner time till evening, they held conferences, (this was called *sabatine*) and, by way of *recreation*, they examined the law cases on which they had to



make reports. This austere and solemn existence, together with the restraint imposed by the magisterial costume, formed a sort of priesthood, whose laborious duties, though not rewarded by large emoluments, were amply paid in honour and consideration. Compare these *venal* magistrates with those of the present day, whose appointments are gratuitous, and let us see where is the balance of utility and respectability."

"Every counsellor in the Parliament of Toulouse," observed the Marquis de Maniban, "purchased his post in the reigns of Louis XIII, and Louis XIV. The amount paid was between seventy and eighty thousand francs. In Paris, the sum was more considerable ; it amounted to fifty thousand crowns. In the reign of Louis XVI, it was requisite to give for these same offices, in the provinces, as much as thirty, forty, or fifty thousand crowns of effective security. The interest was two and a half per cent per annum. What tradesman would strike such a bargain ? The salaries of counsellors amounted in our court, to about one hundred and twenty livres per month——"

"There is another circumstance worthy of remark," said I, begging the President's pardon for the interruption, "M. de Malcor, who was the colleague of the Marquis and of my father, has assured me that these *five louis*, which the magistrate was to receive as the reward of de-



voting his whole life to his duties, were scarcely in any instance paid. So much for the expenses which the Parliaments entailed on France."

"A very laborious counsellor," resumed the Marquis de Maniban, "might, thanks to the stipends allotted to the subalterns, realize an income of about eighteen hundred or two thousand livres per annum. But, to enable him to do this, two conditions were indispensable ; the first was that his occupation should be colossal ; and the second, that other magistrates should be less active ; for, if all had been equally anxious to augment their scanty pittance, the two thousand crowns must have dwindled down to one thousand or twelve hundred at most. This sum was not derived from the state, but emanated from the pleaders. The Doyen of the Parliament of Toulouse alone enjoyed a considerable emolument derived from the letting of houses and shops, situated within the precincts of the court. These habitations were much in request, because, the persons occupying them enjoyed certain privileges ; for example, they might carry on any trade or business without being subject to visits of inspection from the officers of government or the local authorities.

"You see, gentlemen, how slender was the pecuniary advantage attendant on these functions. I doubt much whether the Procureur-General of the Parliament of Paris obtained in money the interest of the eighteen thousand livres, which were



paid to Fouquet for the purchase of the post. The appointment of what was termed a president *à mortier*, cost from five to six hundred thousand livres ; the purchase money was from two hundred ; and seventy thousand livres. But then a chief president was looked upon as a demi-god. Even a president *à mortier* was greater than a prince. The counsellors enjoyed a degree of importance of which it would now be difficult to form an idea. Whenever any of them sojourned in a parish, the local authorities proceeded to pay their respects to them, and delivered to them an address, accompanied by a present of wine and fruit. A privileged place was reserved for them wherever they went.

“ M. de Cambolas, the head of an old Parliamentary family of Toulouse, which had long been distinguished for learning, integrity and freedom from party spirit, resided about as far from our Palais de Justice, as the Porte Saint-Denis is distant from the Carrousel. M. de Cambolas who, being the senior president of the Parliament, was called the *Doyen*, proceeded regularly every morning at six o'clock to the Palais de Justice, mounted on his mule, which was a fine animal of the limousin breed. This important personage, before whom the inhabitants of Toulouse bowed their heads and trembled, trotted to and from his house to the Palais, unaccompanied by a valet or attendant of any kind. The respect inspired by *Monsieur*



*le Doyen* was not unmingled with fear, for he was a severe judge, inflexible to vice, and merciless to the infringers of the law. On arriving at the inner gate of the Palais, M. de Cambolas was met by the usher, who placed a stool for him to step on and helped him to alight. The mule then, at the signal of a gentle tap of the usher's wand, turned round, and set off at a trot to the stable adjoining his master's hotel, where his provender was in readiness for him. At precisely ten minutes before twelve, the mule again started from his resting place, and trotted back alone to the Palais, in the court-yard of which he never failed to arrive, just as the clock struck twelve. The venerable Doyen then bestrode his faithful *limoisin* and returned home : to the mule the business of the day was then over ; though only half ended to his worthy master.

“ This routine had been kept up for the space of thirty years uninterrupted by any accident. The mule passed and repassed every day twice with the Doyen and twice without him, and with such undeviating punctuality with regard to time, that clocks and watches were regulated by his appearance and many a rendez-vous was fixed with the following formula : — ‘ Rely on me : I will be as punctual as the mule of M. de Cambolas.’ The mule was known to all the inhabitants of Toulouse young and old. He shared no small portion of the veneration which was rendered to his master ;



and none of the boys of Toulouse, though certainly not less mischievous than those of Paris, would have ventured to tease or annoy the privileged mule. It happened that there was a Dutchman whose evil star led him to Toulouse. He was a cutler by trade, and he came in quest of employment, which, being a good workman, he easily obtained. He was a quarrelsome, disorderly fellow, always getting into broils, and he committed some offence for which he incurred punishment. The genius of mischief prompted him to seek revenge for this punishment, not, indeed, on the venerable Doyen, but on his scarcely less revered mule.

“ One day, within a few minutes of noon, the faithful animal was trotting along the Rue de Canteliers on his way to the Palais de Justice to fetch his master home, when his legs got entangled in a cord, which had been purposely placed in the way. The mule became frightened, but he succeeded in extricating himself from the trap that had been set for him, and, turning out of his direct course, ran through several narrow lanes. The people in the street who witnessed this occurrence, and trembled for its consequences, ran after the mule, and, having succeeded in overtaking him, conducted him in triumph to the residence of M. de Cambolas.

“ The clock struck twelve, and the worthy Doyen rose from his seat, and prepared to leave the



Palais de Justice ; but who can picture his surprise, when, on reaching the gate, he discovered that the mule was not in attendance, and that there was no servant or messenger from his house to explain the mysterious circumstance ! Could any one have stolen the animal ? . . . Impossible ! . . . To steal the mule of the Doyen of Toulouse, was about as likely as that any thief in Rome should attempt to lay sacrilegious hands on the Pope's tiara. The whole Palais was a scene of consternation. The young counsellors, (prompted by veneration for their respected colleague,) the clerks, ushers, serjeants, registrars, tip-staves, all were hurrying to and fro and making inquiries. No tidings of the mule ! M. de Bertier, one of the presidents, offered M. Cambolas a seat in his carriage and drove him home, where the Doyen's anxiety was relieved by the discovery that the mule had arrived before him.

“ The court took cognizance of this affair. It was judged in a solemn audience, and the Dutchman was declared to have committed a crime of very serious magnitude. By attacking the Doyen's mule, he was guilty of insulting the whole sovereign court of the parliament. He must, it was alleged, have committed this offence, for the purpose of bringing ridicule upon the august magisterial body. He was, consequently, sentenced to be imprisoned, whipped,



branded, and sent to the galleys for five years. He, however, escaped; arrangements having been made to enable him to do so, for our ancestors were equally humane and severe. But, the prisoner was nevertheless condemned in contumacy, and executed in effigy for the sake of example. The example was certainly effectual for years afterwards: mothers were heard to say to their refractory children by way of reprimand:

“ ‘ You rogue, you deserve to be punished like the Dutchman.’ ”

This anecdote, which was told with infinitely more point and humour than I can throw into it, amused us exceedingly. Some one of the company observed, that the sentence of the parliament was ridiculously severe: but others admired the union of rigour and mercy displayed in the sentence. The person on whom the example was made, was a foreigner, and his punishment was, in reality, only banishment from Toulouse. His offence was, it is true, unimportant, and ludicrous, rather than serious, but its punishment was calculated to add to the respect due to the sovereign magistracy. Any act, detrimental to that respect, partook of the nature of sacrilege. But then, on the other hand, by what fatigue, toil, and unremitting service did the judges purchase this respect! They were like slaves, bound to perpetual labour on the soil; it was but just that



the chains which they wove, for the interest of all, should be doubly gilded.

Allusion was made to other judgments pronounced by the parliament of Toulouse, and some of the company disapproved the sentence on the family of Calas.

“Softly, gentlemen,” said the Marquis de Maniban, “softly, if you please....Do you admit the proposition that fanaticism exists, that it pervades all mankind?....then, coming to the application, do you mean to advance that catholics alone are capable of murdering their children? This, I am sorry to say, would be lamentably unjust, and yet, such is the inference you would deduce. All religious creeds, all political opinions have their enthusiasts, who shrink not from the commission of murder. Take, for example, the Jews who massacred those who worshipped other gods than theirs....the pagans, who, after the preaching of the gospel, wished to drown the christians in blood. Look at the assassination of the Duke de Guise, by a protestant....the numberless cruelties inflicted by the Mussulmans on the Greeks....and the attempt to poison Mahomet! Would you attribute all these crimes to catholics? Admit, then, the possibility of a father, not a catholic, sacrificing his son to his faith, and do not heap all these black crimes on the followers of the religion in which you were



born, which some of you profess, and to which you will all, one day or other, return."

This vigorous philippic roused the philosophers of the company.

"What!" they exclaimed, "do you mean to affirm that the family of Calas murdered their son, their brother, and brother-in-law?"

"Yes, gentlemen," replied the Marquis, "that is my opinion, and it is supported by the sentence of two tribunals, one of which is the *Chambre de Tournelle*, of the parliament of Toulouse: this is saying not a little. However, we do not pretend to infallibility; we may be wrong; but, to convince us of our mistake, you must prove, by evidence as clear as daylight, that every parricide, every filicide has been committed by catholics, and, that no other religion whatsoever, presents any example of such a crime. Do you hope to obliterate the remembrance of Brutus, of Manlius Tarquatus, of Timolean, of Cressus, of Atræus, of Sapor, and hundreds of other fathers, who have murdered their sons, and sons who have murdered their fathers, without the pale of christianity? Calvin had Servet roasted at a slow fire for debating questions of speculative theology: do you imagine that he would have spared his own blood? Do not, then, allege that the protestants are free from religious hatred, and, above all, fanaticism! I am well aware that the descendants of the Calas would be indignant if they heard me argue thus:



that would be very natural. Let them try to refute me ; it is their duty to do so. My grandfather maintained the innocence of the family, as may be seen in the writings of Voltaire ; but his wife, whose judgment was not less sound than his, was of the opposite opinion. People may differ on a historical point ; especially, when good evidence may be adduced in support of both sides of a great question.

“ However, the partizans of Calas have fully avenged him. The grandson of the *Capitoul*, David d'Escalonne, (who was chief judge on the trial of Calas,) was executed at Toulouse, in 1794 : there was no shadow of ground for the condemnation of the young and unfortunate Tristan d'Escalonne, except revenge for the condemnation of Calas. Madame de Cambon was sacrificed for the same motive, as were likewise two or three other members of the family. The Calvinists of Toulouse shewed themselves implacable. Who has forgotten the revolutionary fanaticism of the minister, Jullien, who was chosen a member of the National Convention, where he voted for the death of the King without appeal or postponement ? Let us not be told of the tolerance of the Calvinists : there is as much fanaticism among them as among the catholics.”

The discussion threatened to become warm ; and Prince Cambacérès brought it to a conclusion by observing :



“ I have been accused of being a parliamentary ; I do not deny the charge : I am so, for I exercise my reason. But Napoleon was even more favourable to the old parliaments than I. In 1812, when the Emperor was about to depart for the campaign of Russia, I was engaged with him in arranging some judicial appointments. He was consulting private notes, and he grew impatient, for he did not meet with any description which precisely corresponded with the persons he wished ; for he was desirous of being very select in his choice. Suddenly he exclaimed :

“ ‘ Do you know that you have made me take a very wrong step ?’

“ I, Sire ! When ?”

“ ‘ Bah ! these imperial courts . . . . they are mere half measures . . . . mere trickery, tending to no good end. I want something better. Here ! cast your eye over these notes ;—even those which have been furnished by men of the revolution. You will see that, in all cases, the members of the old parliaments, or the descendants, are ranked among the most respectable men in the provinces. Do you know, Monsieur Archi . . . . (he frequently used this abbreviation when addressing me familiarly,) do you know that to have resisted a revolution such as ours, there must have existed, in these families, virtues and talents of the highest order ? I do not allude to fortune—by no means . . . . I know there are many rogues worth a



hundred thousand francs per annum, who have neither honesty nor consistency. These families must have possessed something better than wealth—hereditary honour! Yes, that raised the man to a level with the office; now, on the contrary, the office must be made suitable to the man who is to fill it. The consequence is, a miserably incompetent set of magistrates and other public functionaries. Monsieur, in 1811, it would have been wise to have restored the old parliaments.'

"Well, Sire, did I not propose that measure?"

"Oh!... yes... certainly you proposed it; I gave a negative answer, and there the matter ended. But, if you thought the measure a good one, you should have pointed out to me its beneficial results, and have pressed its adoption; I then should have yielded, for I have no prejudice; I am anxious only for the good of the country. When I am convinced that a thing is bad, I give it up. I can have no interest in wishing to deceive myself. The great advantage, which a nation derives from a king, is that a king is the father of his people, and the owner of the soil. It is natural to be attached to one's children and one's property; we desire that the former should love us, and that the latter should be productive. To be productive, it must be well cultivated, and the sovereign is a fool, who does not seek to accomplish that object by every means in his power.'



“ I admired the lofty views of Napoleon. He soared like an eagle over the point under consideration.

“ The restoration of the parliaments, said I, is a question of the utmost importance. It is connected, too, with several other questions of a difficult nature, for example : hereditary succession, venality, etc. But, Sire, I added, you are all-powerful, and, were I in your place, I would attempt the great enterprise. It would impart irresistible stability to your institutions.”

“ ‘ But,’ replied he, ‘ the old parliaments were perpetually in rebellion against the royal authority. They made representations, and refused to register edicts. By restoring them, we should plunge ourselves into all the dissensions of the old régime, to avert which, I have condemned the Legislative Body to silence. I will never suffer any public assembly to impede the measures of government.’

“ Sire, observed I, every thing, however good, has its bad side. Certainly, the resistance of the parliaments, sometimes perplexed the government ; but, observe, Sire, that these embarrassments occurred only in fiscal cases. It is true, they opposed *lettres de cachet*, which nobody in France approved, except those who signed them. With these exceptions, when did the parliaments meddle in the affairs of government ? Did they ever dictate a cabinet for the King ? No, Sire,



be assured that their independent resistance, gave to the throne more power than they took from it. This resistance was passive and not hostile ; it was, perhaps, a little troublesome, but never injurious.

“ ‘ Monsieur, every assembly which opposes the sovereign, wins the favour of the people. The one gains in power all that the other loses. We live in an age in which the opposition of public assemblies is dangerous. Every thing that has risen from the revolution must command absolute respect. Order can be maintained only on that condition.’ ”

“ ‘ Your Majesty,” said I, “ forgets with what facility those parliaments, so dear to the people on account of their resistance, fell, and how their defenders forsook them. The monarch is the only real source of power. The power of public bodies and assemblies is fictitious. The jealousy which they inspire will always deprive them of their power at the sovereign’s will.”

“ ‘ *This is a subject to be considered.* (When the Emperor used this phrase, it meant that he concurred in the opinion of the person with whom he had been arguing.) The hereditary succession,’ he continued, ‘ has great weight with me. Hereditary parliamentary families would be interested in upholding my house. The more ancient, the greater would be their influence. An alliance between them and me would operate greatly to my advantage. It



would be necessary to diminish the number of the Cours Royales, in the south especially. Bourdeaux, Toulouse, Aix, Grenoble, Lyons, Besançon, Douai, Paris, Strasbourg, Nancy, Amiens or Troyes, Poitiers, Orleans or Bourges ; these would suffice for all France. There must be fifty counsellors at least, and a hundred at most ; and twelve or twenty-four auditors. The security must be from sixty to a hundred thousand francs ; from one hundred and twenty thousand to two hundred thousand for presidents *à mortier* ; the same sum for the imperial procureur-général ; for advocates-general, and counsellors, the sum should be fixed, in proportion to their local importance. The chief president should not be required to give any security :—the post would, consequently, be disposable. The sovereign should have the power of changing the first president at pleasure. Nevertheless, I am fully aware of the necessity of independence in the members of the court ; without it, they could command no consideration. See how our lawyers are regarded now : they are said to be my valets ; but this is a mistake. As to salaries, they should be considerable, or null :—that is a question to be discussed. Would it be right to make fortune indispensable ? Should we not accept merit, though allied with poverty ? These questions need create no embarrassment. Wealth is ever anxious to acquire respect. Rich men will always be eager to marry their daughters to poor nobles, or men of respectability invested with



high functions. Besides, if a man of distinguished talent be poor, it is the duty of his sovereign to enrich him. The members of these Parliaments should wear a dignified costume, a general decoration, and they should gain advancing rank, in proportion to their merit or years of service, and this without soliciting persons near the throne. The magistracy should be a *cul-de-sac*, from which the magistrates should never be suffered to withdraw themselves. It should, above all, be raised beyond the reach of seduction, even on the part of the government. In short, the magistracy ought to form a sort of priesthood, which would never suffer any of its members to dissent from the worship of a jealous god."

When the Arch-Chancellor repeated these words of Napoleon, we could not refrain from expressing our admiration of his ideas, which appeared to us at once profound and exalted. Prince Cambacérès smiled, and thus concluded :

" Yes, gentlemen, such is the man, who, for some months past, his stupid enemies have been assailing with abuse, and describing as devoid of virtue, perspicuity or genius. His superior talents gave him immense power over all who came in contact with him. He was always peculiarly happy in making a reply. He entered upon every question with a fund of new ideas and views. There was as marked a difference as between night and day, in the sittings of the Council of State,



during his absence, and when he presided at the deliberations. His presence seemed to impart additional energy to our mental powers. The Emperor concluded his conversation with me on the subject of the Parliaments, by informing me that he was about to depart for the army, that the war would probably last two years, and that on his return I was to present to him a plan of law, containing clauses calculated to keep the new magistracy in subjection. He suggested that their duties ought to include the superintendence of the laws relating to provisions and public health ; so that the government, being relieved from these duties, would not be the object of reproach in times of scarcity. ‘ Besides,’ said he, ‘ I have observed that the people always respect those whose business it is to superintend cleanliness, tranquillity, and the plentiful supply of provisions in towns and cities. This branch of the duties of the old Parliaments tended to increase the influence and the respect in which they were held.’

“ This, gentlemen, was another admirable proof of the Emperor’s perspicacity. The accuracy of his judgment cannot be doubted. Every thing relating to food, to the safety and cleanliness of the streets, to measures of police, to the price of meat, bread, and other necessities of life, fixes public attention ; and those whose business it is to superintend those regulations rank high in popular respect. Fate



ordained that Napoleon should not eternally consolidate France. Our country was destined to continue in a state of revolution, as the disasters of the two last years have sufficiently proved. We shall now have no Parliaments. The Bourbons will not re-establish them. They are not wise enough to perceive that the security and stability of the throne depend on their revival."

This last observation of His Serene Highness brought to my recollection a circumstance which I related to the company as follows:—

"In April last," said I, "when the Duke d'Angoulême returned to France, he thus addressed M. de Boyer, the *grand vicaire* of the diocese of Alby:—

" ' You and your friends are favourable to the old Parliaments; but we are not. You would advocate the establishment of provincial states, which do not meet our approval. The Parliaments and the States were turbulent bodies, the former in particular. They instigated the revolution. Bonaparte did not restore them; and he had a keen perception of what would be best for himself. We shall follow his example. The King my uncle (Louis XVIII) never approved the Parliaments. He opposed their restoration in 1814. There is no reason to believe that he will change his opinion.'\*

\* Louis XVIII, however, did change his opinion; and before



“ You see, gentlemen,” resumed Prince Cambacérès, “ this anecdote proves the correctness of my prediction. The Emperor, it is true, did not restore the old magistracy ; but he repented that error, and he intended to repair it. It is my anxious wish to justify the character of Napoleon in every way. What false and scandalous stories have been got up respecting him and certain actresses ! Not one of them is true, with the exception of one rather dramatic adventure, which occurred at the house of Mlle. Georges. There is, however, one of Napoleon’s gallant adventures, for the reality of which I can vouch.

“ Josephine had just been divorced, and the Austrian Arch-Duchess had been chosen her successor, when one of the imperial chamberlains, whom I will not mention by name, requested permission to present his daughter-in-law at court. The young lady was pretty, and, though distinguished by a captivating air of simplicity, she was in reality as artful as Circe. She made her appearance at the Tuileries, at Saint-Cloud, at Fontainebleau, at the theatres, and joined the imperial hunting parties ; in short, she went wherever she could hope to throw herself in the way of the Emperor. On these occasions, she could see no

his death he signified his wish to restore the Parliaments. But he could not venture to take that step. The revolutionary party held him in terror. The Bourbons have made innumerable sacrifices to that party ; but they have been ill rewarded.



object but Napoleon ; she sighed, blushed, and affected bashfulness, whilst, at the same time, she was always placed where she must necessarily attract his notice. At other times, the lady would stand gazing and sighing before the portraits of His Majesty.

“ Her family, or at least some members of it, assumed the appearance of being displeased at her conduct. The imperial chamberlain complained to his friends of his daughter-in-law’s unfortunate passion, and the young lady’s mother-in-law took up the matter in the interest of her son. As to the husband himself, he evinced the most philosophic indifference. At length, the affair became the subject of court gossip ; the Princesses of the blood manifested their disapproval of the lady’s conduct. But, after all, how could it be made a subject of complaint that a lady loved the Emperor ? Who could be so uncourtierlike as to blame her ? At first, the affair was merely a subject for joking and quizzing ; but when at length the Emperor seemed really to direct attention to the lady, she and her family were overwhelmed with homage and respect.

“ One day, I attended a sitting of the Council of State at which the Emperor presided. At the close of the sitting, I went to receive his commands, and, having taken leave of him, I stepped into my carriage and drove homeward. I had not got further than about the middle of the Rue du



Bac, when I was overtaken by one of the imperial pages, who informed me that His Majesty wished to speak with me immediately. Of course, I ordered my coachman to turn and proceed to the Tuileries. As I drove along, I puzzled myself in trying to guess what I could be wanted for. I found the Emperor closeted with the minister of the police; then I was more mystified than before; I thought that some formidable conspiracy had been discovered; that some grand *coup d'état* was to be attempted. Nothing of the kind. The Emperor left the Duke de Rovigo, and, conducting me to the recess of one of the windows, he said:

“ ‘ Madame de ——— is rendering herself quite intolerable to me; and the conduct of her relations is still more odious. Her father-in-law is a scoundrel, her husband a mean spirited block-head, and her mother is a vile intriguing woman, by whose art, however, I am not to be duped. As to Madame de ——— herself, her conduct has disgusted me. The abandoned female who unreservedly puts her virtue up to sale, is preferable to the hypocrite, who, for motives equally mercenary, affects a sentimental attachment. Now, what I want you to do is to call on my chamberlain, who is your friend (I disclaimed the honour, and the Emperor laughed), and tell him that I dispense with his service for the space of a year. Inform his wife that I forbid her appearance at court



for six years ; and make known to the affectionate married couple, that to afford them an opportunity of duly appreciating each other's excellent qualities, I give them leave to spend six months in Naples, six months in Vienna, and six months in any other part of Germany.'

" I fulfilled my mission. A great outcry was raised in certain quarters against the tyranny of the despot, and deep sympathy was expressed for an interesting family, who, it was alleged, were ill rewarded for their devoted loyalty. On another occasion of a similar kind, I saw the Emperor in a most violent rage. A lieutenant-colonel had sent him a letter, soliciting promotion, and adding that, should he obtain it, he had two daughters who would be too happy to throw themselves at the feet of their good Emperor, and thank him for the benefit conferred on their father....The *good Emperor* was furiously indignant, and he said to me : ' I don't know what withholds me from having this infamous letter inserted in the order of the day of the writer's regiment.'

" He made some inquiries respecting this officer, and he learned that he had been a *septembriseur* and a friend of Robespierre and Fleuriot ; and that, moreover, he had attained the age which would qualify him for retirement. The Emperor, therefore, immediately granted him his retiring pension. He extended his generosity to the two daughters, who were amiable young females, and



totally unconscious of the infamous project entertained by their father. The Emperor settled a small pension on each of them, on condition of their leaving Paris and retiring to their native city. This fact reflects the highest credit on Napoleon. His estimable qualities are not sufficiently known. The sovereigns of Europe were bent on his destruction ; but they will live to deplore his downfall. With him fell the key stone of the monarchical arch. The present race of kings have not power to stem the revolutionary torrent ; which sooner or later will certainly sweep them from the face of the earth.

“ In Napoleon’s disposition, severity and gentleness were singularly and beautifully blended together. M. de L——, a gentleman of about thirty, married a young lady of sixteen. It was a mercenary marriage arranged by the lady’s friends, who dragged her to the altar, without consulting her feelings. She cherished no affection for her husband ; he became jealous of her, and, though unable to fix upon her the slightest proof of criminality, he murdered her. He was brought to trial, found guilty, and condemned. He petitioned for pardon, and his friends appealed to the Empress Josephine and to me, imploring us to intercede in his behalf. We did so, and the following was Napoleon’s answer.

“ ‘ Why should I pardon this man ? He availed himself of fortune for a vile purpose of bribing the



affections of a girl. He did not succeed in winning them, and he became jealous. His jealousy was not the result of love, but of vanity. He has committed the crime of murder. What urged him to it? Not his honour—for his wife had not injured it. No, he was instigated by brutality, vanity, and self-love....He has no claim to mercy. The rich are too prone to think themselves elevated above the reach of the law: they imagine that wealth is a sacred shield to them. This man has committed a crime for which there is no extenuating circumstance. He must suffer the punishment to which he has been justly doomed. If I were to pardon him, that act of misplaced indulgence, and art. 324 of the Penal Code, would place in jeopardy the life of every married woman. Inasmuch as the law positively protects the outraged husband, so it must protect the wife against the consequences of dislike, interest, caprice, or a new passion, which may impel a husband to obtain a divorce by a more prompt and less expensive course than a legal process.'

" Josephine was urgent in her intercession for M. de L——, in consequence of the interest she felt for some of his friends.

" 'This,' she said, addressing the Emperor, 'is the first favour I have asked of you since you have been Emperor. Surely you will grant it.'

" 'I refuse it.'



“ ‘ Why ?’

“ The Emperor stated his reasons in the way I have just related ; and then he added :

“ ‘ When it is known that your persuasion could not induce me to commit an act of injustice, no one else will henceforth dare to petition me for such a purpose.’

“ He was inexorable.

“ Certainly,” pursued Cambacérès, “ no one will accuse Napoleon of being an indulger in the pleasures of the table. At the Tuileries, his breakfast was laid on a little *guéridon* of mahogany inlaid with mother o’pearl, on which a napkin was spread by way of a table-cloth. His morning meal consisted of eggs, and a haricot salad, after which, he would eat a bit of parmesan cheese and two olives. He took a little of his favourite wine, chambertin, very much diluted with water ; and he crowned the whole by a cup of coffee. He took no liquor, but sometimes, though very rarely, he took a glass of wine. He usually despatched his breakfast in seven or eight minutes. When he eat longer than twenty minutes, at dinner, he considered it quite an *orgie*.

“ He was simple in all his tastes. In dress, he never displayed any trace of vanity. Many of his generals, however, followed the example of Murat, King of Naples, and paid the most studied attention to dress and personal decoration. One of those most distinguished in this way, was



the brave and handsome General Count d'Orsenne, who was a hero on the field of battle, and a type of elegance at court and in society.

“ Count d'Orsenne one day accompanied the Emperor on a reconnoitring excursion. The Emperor had been complaining of thirst, and some one seeing a *vivandière*, or suttler-woman, at a little distance, called to her. The woman did not know Napoleon, or any of his escort. She gave the Emperor a glass of spring water mixed with a little brandy, and then curtsied for payment.

“ ‘ There, my good woman,’ said Napoleon, pointing to Count d'Orsenne, ‘ there is the Emperor, ask him for the money. He pays for us all.’

“ The *vivandière* blushed, and looked embarrassed ; then, turning to the Count, she scanned his splendid uniform with the eye of a connoisseur, and said :

“ ‘ He ! pooh nonsense ! Do you think I am fool enough to believe that. The Emperor is not such a coxcomb. You, Sir, look much more like him yourself.’

“ The Emperor was much amused at this remark, and he gave the woman a double louis.”

Count Daru, who was one of the party on the evening when Prince Cambacérès related the above anecdote, said :

“ Your amusing story, Monseigneur, reminds



me of another also relating to one of those camp-following nymphs, called *vivandières*. You know how carefully the Emperor preserved his incognito when he was with the army. It was well that he did so ; for he frequently ventured into places where, had he been known, he would have incurred the greatest risks. During one of the campaigns in Germany, the Emperor, wrapped in his celebrated grey great coat, was riding about in the environs of Munich, attended only by two orderly officers. He met on the road a very pretty looking female, who, by her dress, was evidently a *vivandière*. She was weeping and was leading, by the hand, a little boy, about five years of age. Struck by the beauty of the woman and her distress, the Emperor pulled up his horse by the road side, and said:

“ ‘ What is the matter with you, my dear ? ’ ”

“ The woman, not knowing the individual by whom she was addressed, and being much discomposed by her grief, made no reply. The little boy, however, was more communicative, and he frankly answered :

“ ‘ My mother is crying, Sir, because my father has beat her. ’ ”

“ ‘ Where is your father ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Close by here. He is one of the sentinels on duty with the baggage. ’ ”

“ The Emperor again addressed himself to the woman and inquired the name of her husband ; but she refused to tell, being fearful lest *the Cap-*



tain, as she supposed the Emperor to be, would cause her husband to be punished. Napoleon, I am sorry to say, had but little confidence in the fair sex. On this occasion, his habitual suspicions occurred to his mind, and he said :

“ ‘ *Malpeste !* your husband has been beating you ; you are weeping, and yet you are so afraid of getting him into trouble that you will not even tell me his name. This is very inconsistent ! May it not be that you are a little in fault yourself ? ’

“ ‘ Alas, Captain ! he has a thousand good qualities, though he has one very bad one . . . . He is jealous . . . . terribly jealous ; and, when he gets into a passion, he cannot restrain his violence. ’

“ ‘ But that is rather serious ; in one of his fits of jealousy, he may inflict on you some severe injury . . . perhaps kill you. ’

“ ‘ And, even if he did, I should not wish any harm to come to him ; for I am sure he would not do it wilfully. He loves me too well for that. ’

“ ‘ And, if I guess rightly, you love him. ’

“ ‘ That is very natural, Captain ; he is my lawful husband and the father of my dear boy ! ’

“ So saying, she fondly kissed her child, who, by the way in which he returned her caresses, proved his affection for his mother. Napoleon was moved by this touching picture, in spite of the heart of iron, of marble, or of adamant, which has so often been allotted to him.

“ ‘ Well, ’ said he, again turning to the woman,



whether you and your husband love each other or not, I do not chose that he should beat you....I am....I am one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, and I will mention the affair to His Majesty.... Tell me your husband's name !'

" ' If you were the Emperor himself, I would not tell it you ; for I know he would be punished.'

" ' Silly woman ! All I want is to teach him to behave well to you, and to treat you with the respect you deserve.'

" ' That would make me very happy, Captain ; but, though he ill treats, me I will not get him punished.'

" The Emperor shrugged his shoulders, made some remark upon female obstinacy, and galloped off.

" When he was out of the woman's hearing, he said to the officers who accompanied him:

" ' Well, gentlemen ! what do you think of that affectionate creature ? There are not many such women at the Tuileries. A wife like that is a treasure to her husband.'

" In the course of a few minutes, the baggage, of which the boy had spoken, came up. It was escorted by a company of the 52nd. Napoleon despatched one of the officers, who was riding with him, to desire the commander of the escort to come to him.

" ' Have you a *vivandière* in your company ?'

" ' Yes, Sire,' replied the Captain.



“ ‘ Has she a child ?’

“ ‘ Yes, little Gentil, whom we are all so fond of.’

“ ‘ Has not the woman been beaten by her husband?’

“ ‘ I was not aware of the circumstance, till some time after its occurrence. I have reprimanded the man.’

“ ‘ Is he generally well conducted?’

“ ‘ He is the best behaved man in the company. He is very jealous of his wife, but without reason. The woman’s conduct is irreproachable.’

“ ‘ Does he know me by sight?’

“ ‘ I cannot say, Sire . . . but, as he has just arrived from Spain, I think it is probable he does not.’

“ ‘ Try and ascertain whether he has ever seen me, and, if he has not, bring him hither. Say you wish to conduct him before the General of the division.’

“ On inquiry, it appeared that Napoleon had never been seen by the grenadier, who was a very fine looking man, about five and twenty. When he was conducted to Napoleon, the latter said in a familiar tone :

“ ‘ What is the reason, my lad, that you beat your wife? She is a young and pretty woman ; and is a better wife than you are a husband. Such conduct is disgraceful in a French grenadier.’

“ ‘ Bah, General ! if women are to be believed,



they are never in the wrong. I have forbidden my wife to talk to any man whatever; and yet, in spite of my commands, I find her constantly gossiping with one or other of my comrades.'

" ' Now, there is your mistake. You want to prevent a woman from talking....you might as well try to turn the course of the Danube. Take my advice; do not be jealous. Let your wife gossip and be merry. If she were doing wrong, it is likely she would be sad instead of gay. Your comrades are not absolutely capuchins; but I am much mistaken if they will not respect another man's wife. I desire that you do not strike your wife again; and, if my order be not obeyed, the Emperor shall hear of it. Suppose His Majesty were to give you a reprimand, what would you say then?'

" ' Ma foi! General, my wife is mine, and I may beat her if I choose. I should say to the Emperor: Sire, look you to the enemy, and leave me to manage my wife.'

" Napoleon laughed, and said: ' My good fellow, you are now speaking to the Emperor.'

" The word produced its usual magical effect. The grenadier looked confused, held down his head, lowered his voice, and said:

" ' Oh, Sire! that quite alters the case. Since your Majesty commands, I of course obey.'

" ' That's right. I hear an excellent character of your wife. Every body speaks well of her.



She braved my displeasure, rather than expose you to punishment. Reward her by kind treatment. I promote you to the rank of sergeant, and, when you arrive at Munich, apply to the *Grand Maréchal du Palais*, and he shall present you with four hundred francs. With that you may buy a suttler's caravan, which will enable your wife to carry on a profitable business. Your son is a fine boy, and, at some future time he shall be provided for. But, mind, never let me hear of your beating your wife again. If I do, you shall find that I can deal hard blows as well as you.'

" ' Ah, Sire ! I can never be sufficiently grateful for your kindness.'

" Two or three years after this circumstance, the Emperor was with the army in another campaign. Napoleon, you know, has a wonderful power of recollecting the countenances of persons whom he has once seen. On one of his marches, he met and recognised the *vivandière* and her son. He immediately rode up to her, saying :

" ' Well, my good woman, how do you do ? Has your husband kept the promise he made me ?'

" The poor woman burst into tears, and threw herself at the Emperor's feet.

" ' Oh, Sire ! Oh, Sire ! Since my good star led me into the gracious presence of your Majesty, I have been the happiest of women.'

" ' Then reward me by being the most virtuous of wives.'



“ A few pieces of gold were presented with these words ; and, as Napoleon rode off, the cries of *vive l'Empereur !* uttered amidst tears and sobs by the mother and her son, were enthusiastically repeated by the whole battalion.”

I am a faithful historian, and I am bound to state that this anecdote, which was related in a very interesting way by Count Daru, deeply moved the feelings of all who heard it. In truth, had we not been restrained by fear of the police, I think we should have followed the example of the grenadier's comrades, and have shouted *vive l'Empereur !* But, in 1814, it would not have been very prudent to have yielded to such an ebullition of enthusiasm. Armies led by such a man as Napoleon, could not fail to be victorious. Their triumphs were always certain, until they were required to achieve impossibilities. Even then, they did not shrink from the bold attempt; and on fifty fields of battle these sublime words have been verified : *la garde meurt et ne se rend pas.*

The noble traits in Napoleon's character, are an inexhaustible theme :—to record them would be a never-ending chapter. His vigour of intellect, too, was truly great. There seemed no object which did not come within the range of his perception. He was most anxious to rally round himself the different parties by which France was divided. I heard Prince Cambacérès relate, “ that one summer's evening, when he was



walking with the Emperor in the gardens of Fontainebleau, Napoleon suddenly stopped, and, gazing attentively at the château, said :

“ ‘ I am not surprised, Prince Cambacérès, that the members of the house of Bourbon should regret the past . . . So many fine palaces, and the government of such a country ! I pity them. Their mourning must now be eternal. My dynasty is now firmly rooted. *Unto us a son is born !*’ The use of this scriptural expression, struck me as remarkable.

“ ‘ My brothers,’ continued Napoleon, ‘ are reigning in other kingdoms, (this was in 1811.) I am allied by blood to Austria. To dethrone me, is impossible ; therefore, farewell to the Bourbons. Why can they not see the fact as it really is ? Why do they still cling to the broken fragments of a crown which can never again be repaired ? This irritates me ; and my anger is to be feared as I have already shown them. The lesson has not availed.’ This was clearly an allusion to the death of the Duke d’Enghien.

“ ‘ The Emperor,’ continued Prince Cambacérès, “ resumed his walk, and I accompanied him in silence. After we had proceeded a little distance, he said :

“ ‘ If I were in the situation of *those people*, I would submit to my fate : and, instead of constantly turning my thoughts to the past, I would endeavour to improve my present condition.



There are two islands in which they might establish themselves without difficulty ; I allude to Cyprus and Candia : one or the other, or even both. I and the other powers of Europe might enter into an arrangement with the Ottoman Porte. I would even undertake the expense of establishing them in the outset. I would send troops, if required, and maintain an army there for a considerable time. In short,' here he lowered his voice, I cannot tell why, ' I would give a hundred, or a hundred and fifty millions by way of indemnity, on condition of an alliance between the two families—a marriage between the Duke de Berri and my niece, Zenaïde, but without the crown of Spain, which shall be subject to the Salic law.\* What do you think of this plan of settling all differences ?'

" The ball being thus thrown at me, I could not do otherwise than take it up. I was not a little astonished at what I had heard, and I replied :

" Sire, this is a most serious and important question. It is certain that all reasonable hope ought to be extinct in the hearts of the Bourbons. But still it is scarcely to be expected that those

\* The Princess Zenaïde was the eldest daughter of the King of Spain, (Joseph Bonaparte.) Her hand was solicited by Ferdinand VII, but Napoleon would not consent to the marriage. The Princess married her cousin, Charles Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Mussignano, a son of Prince Lucien.



who have once been seated on the throne of France, should willingly forego all thought of returning to that illustrious station. Besides, do not their friends constantly nurse them in the hope of a restoration?

“ ‘ Their friends are fools, blockheads, base flatterers ! Such conduct deserves the severest punishment. Nurse them in the hope of a restoration ! ’ exclaimed Napoleon, striking his foot on the ground. ‘ How can the Bourbons return to France ? By taking my life. What then ? my son, my brothers, my generals, my functionaries, the purchasers of national property, the jacobins and the regicides would still be here. They know that the Bourbons would wage implacable war against them ; that they would pursue them to extermination. Besides, Austria will not prefer distant relatives to the daughter of her own Emperor. My cause is now hers . . . . If they spare my life, how many years must elapse before they will dare attempt to invade France, and, above all, to dictate laws to us ? Can you answer that question, Prince ? ’

“ I shook my head negatively. Alas ! in 1811 who could have foreseen the disasters of 1812, of 1813, and the inconceivable catastrophe of the present year ? Certainly no one. I saw and thought as the Emperor did. I forgot the seeming distance which, in 1789, separated Louis XVI from that scaffold which he mounted four years after-



wards. The decrees of Providence are far beyond the calculations of human foresight !

“ Napoleon, still absorbed in his idea, thus continued :

“ ‘ Well, since you agree with me in thinking that to dethrone me and my son would be an impossibility, endeavour to seek out a clever man, unconnected with any party . . one who can manage a negociation ably. Direct him to go to England and to see the Count de Lille, whom they style Louis XVIII. He is a man of sense, and will see the matter in its right point of view, more readily than the rest of the family. If I could gain him over to my project, it might soon be accomplished. You will be cautious not to allow any hint of this to reach the Cabinet of London. It would throw obstacles in the way. Its interest is to prevent me getting rid of embarrassing, though not dangerous, enemies. This is a delicate and important mission, and it shall make a Prince of him who executes it well and faithfully . . . . Yes, I will make him a Prince. But he who undertakes it must possess address, eloquence, courage, and, above all, perseverance.’

“ The Emperor then proceeded to trace out the course to be pursued. He had previously reflected on the subject ; but he did not see the invincible obstacle ; that which must necessarily overthrow the whole plan, and render it impossible that either the exiled Bourbons or those of Sicily



would ever consent to his proposition. The islands which he offered were almost depopulated. Their only inhabitants were Mussulmans or schismatic Greeks, but no Roman Catholics. The sovereign who accepted such a crown, must have reigned in a desert, or have had barbarians for his subjects. Besides, neither England nor Turkey would ever consent to the establishment of the proposed new state, especially if France supplied it with an army.

“ These considerations induced me to say to the Emperor—

“ Why will your Majesty not offer Naples, or Tuscany, the Ionian Islands with Ragusa, or even Venice ?

“ ‘ No, no,’ he replied resolutely, ‘ all those places are too near France. A sea is not a sufficient barrier. I should be at ease if they were in China ; but, in the places you have mentioned, a journey of a day or two would bring them here. That must not be.’

“ I remained silent, and here our conversation ended. When I was alone, I began to consider where I should find a man capable of undertaking the difficult mission which the Emperor had traced out. The result was, that I fixed upon a woman. You smile, gentlemen ; but there was reason to believe that a female minister would be the best. The lady was introduced to me by the Duke de Rovigo, who assured me she was trust-worthy, whilst, at the same, he extolled her talents and



address, and added that she had been intimately connected with the old court. The Duke further observed, that such an agent would be easily disavowed in case of necessity ; and that she was altogether calculated to manage the business better than even a skilful diplomatist.

“ The Duke de Rovigo accordingly introduced me to Madame de N——, who appeared to me to be very well qualified for the mission, and we arranged the plan to be pursued. She spoke of the Court of Hartwell, as if perfectly well acquainted with it, and appeared quite confident of the success of her undertaking. I, however, was not so sanguine. Anxious to learn some further particulars respecting Madame de N——, I addressed myself to M. de Talleyrand, and asked him whether he had ever known her.

“ ‘ I might possibly have had some slight acquaintance with her,’ said he, ‘ but I cannot remember. Some years ago, I was a man of gallantry ; but I have grown old and steady, now.’

“ I don’t doubt it. But, Prince, I wish to know whether you can give me any information respecting this Madame N—— ?

“ ‘ You have no idea,’ he replied, ‘ how much my memory fails me.’

“ I could plainly perceive that some artful design was concealed under this pretended loss of memory. I asked Prince Talleyrand no more questions on the subject of Madame N——, but



the bare mention of her name had let him into some idea of the intrigue. The consequence was, that a hint of it was by some means or other conveyed to Louis XVIII ; for, when my ambassadress presented herself at Hartwell, she found that her arrival was expected.

“ In pursuance of my inquiries respecting Madame de N——, I wrote to the Duke of Otranto. He immediately answered me by the following letter :

“ ‘ The lady you mention was one of my pensioners, together with Mesdames H——, V——, Vi——, F——, L—— B—— and several others. She is not wanting in talent and judgment. The degree of confidence to be reposed in her depends entirely on the reward she is to receive. If she can gain anything by deceiving you, she will not hesitate to do so. I should think it likely she will pursue her old course, which made me quarrel with her. My successor, who is a very simple man, has suffered himself to be cajoled by her. She makes him admire the stars at noon-day ; take care that she shews them to you only in the darkness of night.’

“ This description of Madame de N—— amused me ; but, at the same time, it created in my mind doubt and suspicion. I called on the lady, and informed her of what the Duke of Otranto had said of her. She laughed.



“ ‘Fouché,’ she observed, ‘never forgives any one who outwits him. He thinks he is entitled to reserve to himself the monopoly of cunning. He laid a snare to entrap me, and I made him fall into it. *Inde iræ.*’

“ You understand latin, Madam ?” said I.

“ ‘Yes, Monseigneur, I also speak English, German and Italian. You may trust to me, and I can render myself very useful to you.’

“ Not knowing any one better suited to the purpose, I closed my arrangements with Madam N——. Talleyrand, as I have already mentioned, had given notice of her intended arrival. By some indirect and underhand means, he kept up a regular correspondence with the English cabinet. On reaching Hartwell, therefore, the lady did not meet with the reception she expected. It was at first proposed to send her away without letting her see the *Pretender*, if I may use the term then generally applied in France to Louis XVIII. But his most christian Majesty expressed a wish to see Madame N——. She wrote me a letter after her arrival in England, which I will read to you. The Prince went to his *secrétaire* and procured the letter, which he read as follows :\*

\* In 1819, Prince Cambacérès gave me the autograph copy of this letter, of which I retained possession until, by the events of July and August 1830, I was deprived of my autographs and pictures.



“ Monseigneur,

“ It is not without difficulty that I have succeeded in fulfilling the intentions of Your Serene Highness. No sooner had I set foot in the classic land of liberty, than I was assailed, on the one hand by spies, and on the other by the agents of a meddling and despotic police. The latter threatened to place me under the operation of the alien act. But I remonstrated; I addressed a letter to the Count de Lille,\* acquainting him with the motives which had brought me to England. He then expressed an earnest desire to see me, and, in compliance with his wish, I was invited to Hartwell. During my stay in London, I had already seen the amiable and noble minded Count de la Châtre. I cannot speak too highly of him. He assured me that England would never come to an agreement with the present government of France. He loves his country, and regrets his separation from it. I assured him, that the obstacles which opposed his return to it might be easily removed. He replied that, being a royalist in heart, he had worshipped misfortune as a sort of religion, of which the King was the God, and that consequently he should consider himself guilty

\* We had agreed that Madame N——— should address Louis XVIII by the title of Count de Lille. This arrangement enabled us to maintain negotiation on a footing of incognito, and smoothed the difficulties which vanity or the feeling of importance might have created.



of apostacy were he to return. I could not but admire these generous and honourable sentiments.

“ The Count de la Châtre spoke in terms of veneration of the Duchess d’Angoulême, whom he described as a most noble minded and generous woman. He said very little of the Duke d’Angoulême. I was aware that the Duke de Berry had contracted a left handed marriage, the only fruits of which were two daughters. Thus, then, the elder branch of the *old* Royal House, *tombe en quenouille*, according to the terms of the salic law ; and, therefore, all future pretensions must be at an end. The marriage of Madame Royale being without issue, there are persons here who would advise the Count de Lille and his brother the Count d’Artois to marry again. These are unwise counsellors.

“ I inquired what the Duke of Orleans had been doing since his expedition to Cadiz. I am informed that he is endeavouring to make his fortune at Palermo. It appears to be his intention to settle there. His family, since the time of the Regent, who profited by the operations of Law, have property in the banks of England, Holland, and the Hans Towns, in addition to the immense revenues they possess in France. You may mention these circumstances to the Emperor, for I have them on accurate authority.

“ The Prince has, by his marriage, a son, born in October last year, (1810). He bears the title



of the Duke de Chartres. The Duchess of Orleans has, I am informed, just been delivered of a Princess. The Duke has come to a reconciliation with the Bourbons of the elder branch. They have pardoned his father's conduct, as well as the errors of his own youth. He has conducted himself very well in England, on all the occasions on which he has visited this country. I am told that he is artful, and so reserved, that it is not easy to discover his sentiments or opinions. Let not the Emperor be deceived :—the Duke of Orleans is the only individual to be feared, in the event of a struggle.

“ On my arrival at Hartwell, a lady's maid was appointed to attend on me, and a man servant to accompany me in my walks : these were two spies. The Count de Blacas paid me a visit. He is a good looking man, and that is all. He has but little intelligence, and still less knowledge of the world. He has created for himself a little universe, the two boundaries of which are London and Edinburgh ; and, in his simplicity, he believes the whole world to be included in that space. He pictures France as being in the last stage of misery and destitution :—the people dying of hunger, the prisons full, women yoked to the ploughs, the men all with the army, except the lame and the blind ; in short, the terror of 93 unabated. As to the Imperial Court, the Count's notion of it is, that the men composing it are a set of vulgar, ignorant, profligates, and the



women *vivandières* or *marchandes de modes*. He verily believes that Napoleon daily honours you and his ministers with kicks and cuffs, and horse-whips his chamberlains—that he is hated by the people—execrated by the army;—that he is ugly and diseased;—that he is guilty of incest and every revolting crime—in short, that he is worse than any ogre in a fairy tale.

“ Nothing can be more diverting than to hear the Count de Blacas express his firm belief in all these monstrosities, every one of which is, to him, an article of faith. He was very anxious that I should make him my confidant, and friend. I told him, with a very grave air, that I thought that might perhaps be attended with danger, both for my heart and my head: that I might lose the former, and compromise the latter. This excuse appeared to him perfectly reasonable; and the consequence was, he consented, though reluctantly, to usher me to the presence of his master.

“ The sufferings which the Count de Lille has undergone, have not impaired his looks. He is a handsome man, with quite the Bourbon cast of features. His fine blue eyes are mild, dignified, and intelligent, and his mouth has a humourous perhaps a somewhat satirical expression. His infirmities have spoiled his figure, and it is easy to perceive that his legs will die before any other part of his body. He has a beautiful hand; and, altogether, a truly royal and imposing appearance.



“ His dress is very simple : usually consisting of a blue frock or *redingote*, a waistcoat of wadded satin, and small-clothes of dark crimson velvet. He rarely wears a sword. When he goes out, he wears a three cornered cocked hat, and always the cordon and decoration of the Holy Ghost, the ribbon of St. Michael, and the cross of St. Louis :—I have also seen him wear the Swedish orders, out of respect to the dethroned King. A cane assists him in walking ; his pace is slow, tottering, and apparently impeded by pain. He is tortured by the gout. He cannot mount a horse, and certainly a kingdom was never conquered in a carriage.\*

“ However, bodily pain does not, in the least degree, diminish the vivacity of his mind. His conversation is brilliant, and characterized by extensive and varied information. His gallantry, too, charmed me. He has read a great deal, and has a retentive memory : and his natural judgment is matured by experience. In short, he is a man of distinguished talent. Before I saw him, I had prepared myself to be amused by his absurdities ; but I took my leave of him, full of admiration of his magnanimous feelings, and truly royal qualifications. He thoroughly comprehends France, her happiness, her power, and her wants ; he knows what she requires, and only regrets that he cannot give it to her.

\* In 1815, Napoleon made an exception to the strategic maxim here laid down by Madame de N——.



“ He chatted with me very agreeably, and laughed at the propositions I was instructed to make to him. ‘ I am not ambitious,’ said he, ‘ I am not eager to reign : and, therefore, I prefer exile, to a throne which would not be my own. Let Bonaparte’ (for so he named His Majesty the Emperor and King)—let Bonaparte descend from the throne of France : and then let him choose for himself any one of all the kingdoms he has conquered, except Naples, Spain and Parma, and I will present it to him. But, to renounce the inheritance bequeathed to me by my ancestors, to sanction the crimes of the revolution, to legitimize the murder of my brother and my nephew, to recognize the destructive principle of the sovereignty of the people, those are acts of which I never will be guilty.’

“ I saw that my mission was at an end ; I named the offers I was authorized to make. He laughed at the sovereignty and the millions, and, above all, at the proposal of the French army.

“ ‘ That,’ said he, ‘ would merely be a prison within sight ; and I suppose that my guards, would some fine day receive orders to carry me and my family to some other place. Such lures may entice children. It is like telling a boy he may catch sparrows by putting a grain of salt on their tails.’ These were the words he made use of.

“ When I left the Count de Lille, I found M. de Blacas in waiting for me. He put some stupid



questions to me with the view of finding out what had been the nature of my conversation with the King. I related it to him almost word for word. My candour completely mystified him, and he did not believe a word that I said. What would have been the use of taking any trouble to deceive such a fool !

“ There is among the emigrants at Hartwell, a man of distinguished talent. I allude to Père Elysée, who officiates as surgeon to the Count de Lille. He is a man of energy and spirit, and devotedly attached to the Prince. He has every temporal merit without any priestly faults. He is an extremely agreeable man, very lively in conversation, and an excellent teller of a story. He, too, regrets his absence from France ; but he would not return without the King.

“ I have seen Madame Royale, but she would not receive me. Nevertheless, I will do her justice. She is adored by the whole household ; for she is an excellent mistress : she is cold to strangers, but she treats the persons in her service as though they were her children. In spite of her poverty, she dispenses a great deal of charity. The poor people in the neighbourhood revere her highly, and they say that God never suffers her purse to be empty of alms, for that if she gives away all its contents at night, it is full again next morning : and it is among schismatics that this fable has gained credit. It is she who in-



spires the family with fortitude and resignation. If she could ascend the throne, she would be a great Queen.

“ Her husband is one of the best of men. He is brave, and full of noble feeling ; but he is too distrustful of himself. His timidity and passive obedience will always be prejudicial to him. Respecting his brother, the Duke de Berry,\* opinions differ ; some pronounce him to be the hope of the family, others regard him as a Prince of very mediocre merit. I did not see him, and therefore can say nothing of him from my own knowledge. His morganatic marriage† is an event deeply deplored by the emigrants. I have not seen either the venerable Prince de Condé, or the Duke de Bourbon. They are much respected here.

“ Such, Monseigneur, is the result of my journey. Of course, it cannot answer your expectation. The little I was authorized to offer,

\* He was assassinated by Louvel on the 13th of February, 1820.

† In Germany, *morganatic*, or left-handed marriages, are those by a sovereign with a female inferior in rank to a Princess ; or between a Princess, and a private gentleman. They are merely conscientious unions, and the children born of them can inherit only personal property, and not landed estates, or sovereignties. A marriage of this nature was concluded by his Royal Highness the Duke de Berry. A veil of respect must be drawn over this passage in the life of the unfortunate Prince. Two daughters, distinguished for their virtues and graces, were the issue of this marriage. Both are married to noblemen of illustrious birth ; one to the Prince de L——, and the other to Count de C——.



could not tempt a Prince who is not ambitious, who can live on a little, who is without children, and who, above all, has right on his side. Had the offer consisted of the crown of Italy, Milan, Venice, Genoa, Lucca, or Tuscany, it possibly might have been listened to ; but, even then, I would not have answered for its being accepted. Now, Sir, how am I to be rewarded for my trouble? I shall proceed to Hamburgh, and there await your answer."

When Prince Cambacérès had finished reading this letter, we all assured him that it had very much amused us. The portraits sketched by the writer were striking likenesses. M. de Blacas was hit off to the life, and we could not but admire the accuracy of the pencil which, in 1811, had portrayed him precisely as he appeared to us in 1814. Louis XVIII and the Duchess d'Angoulême were likenesses very faithfully described. As to the Dukes d'Angoulême and de Berry, the former had, by his very gallant conduct in the south, acquired the esteem of all Frenchmen, and the latter had been so foully calumniated, that a strong prejudice existed against him. The Duke of Orleans was the object of unanimous eulogy in 1814, which led us all to concur in remarking, that the lady had scarcely rendered him justice. However, we were all much interested and amused by the letter.



“ Well,” observed the Prince, “ I can assure you that I was not so well pleased with the letter as you are, at the time I received it. The change of opinion wrought in my ambassadress by the mere effect of the royal audience; the title of King which she so repeatedly applied to the person whom we looked upon as a pretender, put me not a little out of humour. I did not venture to show it to the Emperor. I sent for the Duke de Rovigo, wishing to screen my responsibility, and, as Madame N—— was his protégée, I presented the missive to him. He was, at first, somewhat embarrassed; but, on a second perusal of the epistle, he began to discover in it as many charms as its fair writer herself possessed in his eyes. He extolled its natural and graceful style, and added, in a tone of comical enthusiasm, at which I could not forbear smiling—

“ ‘ It is quite as good as the over-praised writing of Madame de Staël. Indeed, her talent will not bear comparison with that of Madame N——.’

“ Perhaps not, said I, yet I fear it would be useless to present this letter to the Emperor. I think it is probable he would not share your romantic admiration of our female diplomatist.

“ An instinct of common sense inclined the Minister of Police to my opinion. We then agreed to say nothing to the Emperor on the subject, until Madame N——'s return. The Duke presented her with a hundred thousand francs out



of the funds arising from the sale of gaming-house licenses, as a token of acknowledgment for her unsuccessful mission. She returned to Paris quite in good spirits. We then broached the subject to the Emperor. By way of gilding the pill, we informed him that Cyprus and Candia had been positively rejected at Hartwell; but that if the negotiations were again renewed with the offer of the whole of Upper Italy, Illyria, Dalmatia, the Ionian Islands, Tuscany and Lucca, it might be accepted, with the addition of two thousand millions of francs, payable in twenty years.

“ On hearing this, Napoleon started with astonishment, and exclaimed :

“ ‘ Are they mad ? Why do they not ask for France ? And I suppose Genoa and Piedmont are to be included in the bargain ? ’

“ Yes, Sire.

“ ‘ Well, then, we will remain as we are. We will not disturb the *statu-quo*. I shall be the gainer. All Italy ! . . . . Two thousand millions of francs ! . . . . To have them touching my frontiers ! . . . . Why we should hear news of them every day.’

“ ‘ Sire,’ said Savary, ‘ you forget the resource of conquest.’

“ ‘ Oh ! if they are to be driven away from the place I assign to them, it would be better to spare the expense of a war, and the outlay of two or three millions which I should have to make be-



fore commencing it, and which would serve only to give me a few new difficulties to smoothe. Besides, it is necessary that the compact should be made in good faith, lest the question should hereafter become a matter of dispute. My dear Prince, you are not fortunate in your negotiations. Whom did you entrust with this affair.'

"A lady," replied I, not without some degree of embarrassment.

"A lady...and pray who selected her.'

"I Sire!"

"I compliment you. This was a trait of address on your part. You did well to send them a female ambassador. It was returning upon them, though somewhat late, the ridiculous mission which they addressed to me through the medium of the Duchess de Guise. Diplomatsists of that sort are suited to the taste of the Bourbons.'

"But, Sire, said I, Poland still remembers the brilliant political embassy of Madame de Guebriant."

"True! But the exception proves the rule. And what says your ambassadress of the people at Hartwell?"

"Savary now thought it was his turn to speak. He informed the Emperor that Madame N—— had described the Pretender as being an affable old gentleman in his dotage; that his brother was completely forgotten, being, in consequence of his



debts, unable to stir out of a royal palace in Edinburgh, which had been allotted to him as his place of residence ; that the sons of the Count d'Artois and the Duke de Bourbon, were not objects of any personal consideration. The only person of whom he said Madame de N—— had given a favourable report, was the Duchess d'Angoulême. It was in reply to this string of falsehoods, that the Emperor made the remark, which has since been often repeated, and which was suggested solely by the misrepresentations of the Minister of the Police. The Emperor, hearing so poor an account of the Princes of the house of Bourbon, and so much praise bestowed on Madame Royale, exclaimed :

“ ‘ That woman is the only man in the family ! ’ ”



## CHAPTER VI.

Louis Sebastien Mercier—Details hitherto unpublished, relating to the assassination of Marat—Trial and execution of Charlotte Corday—The source of her fanaticism explained—Napoleon's belief in fatality—His courage and disregard of personal danger—The Imperial Chamberlains—Example of courtly meanness—The gilded weathercock—An ungrateful chamberlain on the 20th of March—An anecdote for the edification of honest men—Wise maxims of Cambacérès—Adventures of a courtier from 1787 to 1830—Amusing letter from a provincial lady to a friend in Paris—Missive from an ambitious poet—Literary discussion—The classic school and the romantic school—Cause of literary failures and disappointments—Prevalence of suicide—Literary opinions of Cambacérès—Rétif de la Bretonne—Chenier and his *Epistle to Voltaire*—Napoléon's displeasure, and Chenier's punishment.

AMONG the distinguished men whose friendship I have had the good fortune to enjoy, and whose memory is indelibly engraven in my heart, I place, in the foremost rank, Louis Sebastien Mercier. He was a man of eminent talent ;—eccentric no doubt ; I may say, even absurd in his endeavours to depreciate Homer, Newton, Boileau and Racine ; but his animated pictures of Paris are radiant with wit and fancy. His writings are charac-



terized by a philosophic, humane and tolerant spirit. His detractors have said that he merely noted down on the posts the reflections which occurred to his mind in the streets. But this observation is equally satirical and unjust. He was certainly far superior to his antagonists Laharpe, Marmontel and Dorat. Mercier was a man of genius ; they were mere arrangers of words.

I have already stated that he was a member of the National Convention, and that he was one of those who did not vote for the King's death. I have in my possession some of his autograph manuscripts, containing some unpublished particulars relating to the assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday. I subjoin them, doubting not that the reader will peruse them with interest.

“ On the 15th of July 1793, I was dining at a restaurateur's in the Rue Saint-Honoré, which I was in the habit of frequenting on account of its proximity to my place of residence. My attention was suddenly roused by an extraordinary noise in the street, and I saw a crowd of people rushing towards the house of a man named Duplay, where the Robespierres lodged. At that time, no disturbance in the streets could be regarded as a matter of indifference, and I hurried to the door. Addressing myself to a man, in the garb of a mechanic, I inquired what was the matter ? He replied in breathless hurry and excitement :



“ ‘ Marat is dead. The aristocrats have murdered him. . . . They have got young Capet out of the Temple, and are bearing him in triumph along the Boulevards. They mean to take him to the Tuileries.’ ”

“ All this appeared to me too absurd to deserve a moment's credit. I concluded that the riot was caused by some project for exciting the sections, and to get up another 31st of May. I, therefore, proposed going to the Hall in which we held the sittings of the Convention, where I knew I should obtain accurate information. As I passed along the streets, the report of the death of Marat gathered confirmation ; but I heard nothing more about the liberation of the unfortunate Louis XVII. I heard, likewise, that the assassination had been committed by a female ; but as to who or what she was I could learn nothing.

“ The first deputy I met was Augustin Robespierre. His countenance sufficiently denoted the agitation of his mind. He repeated to me all that he had heard, and the intelligence was very soon communicated to us officially. I have collected together all the particulars of this extraordinary event. It was a case in which virtue was driven to the perpetration of crime, by beholding a great criminal screened from the punishment of human laws.

“ Marie-Anne-Charlotte de Corday d'Armans



was born at Saint-Saturnin, in the province of Normandy on the 23rd of January 1768. She was of noble origin, well educated, beautiful, amiable, and endowed with extraordinary energy of mind. She entered into the political excitement of the time ; but, instead of professing royalist opinions, like the rest of her family, she was an approver of the downfall of the old régime, and the establishment of republican power. Still she was too virtuous to descend to the extreme of jacobinism. Marat and his incendiary writings had excited her indignation ; and she conceived the project of ridding France of one whom she regarded as a monster in human form. Calumny has alleged that a *liaison* of a tender kind existed between her and Barbaroux, the Apollo of the Revolution ; but this is untrue. Charlotte Corday was a woman of honour. It was patriotism only that armed her with the dagger of the assassin.

“ The deputies, who had been proscribed after the 31st of May, took refuge in Calvados, where Charlotte Corday resided. She became acquainted with them, and their complaints afforded increased excitement to her ardent imagination. Being attached to their cause, she was naturally indignant at the treatment they had endured, and, as she could not help them to redress their injuries, she resolved at last to revenge them on one of their implacable enemies. Without communicat-



ing her design to any one, she quitted Normandy and came to Paris.

“ Fauchet, one of our party, who was acquainted with her, procured her admittance to one of the tribunes of the Convention. This act of courtesy, which was rendered as a matter of course to any one by whom it was solicited, cost poor Fauchet his life. Charlotte Corday listened attentively to our speeches, and expressed her surprise at the fury and violence manifested by some of the members of the Convention. She did not see Marat, who was confined at home by illness. He was the victim of a dreadful and incurable disorder, to which the most active medical remedies could afford only temporary relief.

“ Charlotte Corday, having resolved on speedily terminating the career of Marat, inquired for the abode of the friend of the people. She was directed to the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, No. 44 ; but, as she was informed that none but his intimate acquaintance were admitted to see him, she sent him the following note :—

“ Citizen,

“ “ I have just arrived from Caen. The interest you feel for the welfare of the country, doubtless renders you anxious to be made acquainted with the events which have taken place in that part of



the Republic. I will call on you about one o'clock. Have the goodness to receive me.'

" Marat sent no answer to this note, either because he supposed it to have been written by some idle adventurer, or, because his bodily suffering had for a time extinguished his revolutionary fanaticism. But, Charlotte Corday was not daunted. She sent a second note, more urgent than the first, but which received no more attention. At length, on the 15th of July, she wrote for the third time. In this last letter, she alluded to misfortunes which had gathered over her head, and conjured Marat to receive her, on account of the important secrets which she had to reveal to him, touching the safety of the Republic.

" The messenger who delivered this note, had no sooner left Marat's house, than Charlotte Corday, who had followed him closely, entered the anti-chamber. She was there accosted by two females, who told her that she could not see Marat, because he was at that moment taking a bath.

" She insisted, and some altercation ensued. Marat, whose chamber adjoined the anti-room, hearing loud voices, rang to inquire what was the matter. On being informed that a lady wished to see him, and that she was the same person who had written to him several times, he felt a fatal curiosity to see her. He accordingly rose



from the bath, and, when he was ready to receive her, Charlotte Corday was introduced. Her beauty and prepossessing manners inspired Marat with so much confidence that he dismissed his attendants, and remained alone with the woman, who, in a few moments, was to deprive him of life. The conversation commenced on the affairs of Calvados. Charlotte Corday, though pre-occupied by the terrible object of her visit, maintained her share of the conversation with great calmness, and furnished the information which Marat sought. She gave him the names of the public functionaries and deputies, who were in open rebellion against the National Assembly, and Marat declared that, within a fortnight, they should all be brought to the scaffold.

“ These words were his sentence of death. Charlotte Corday drew from her bosom a sharp knife and plunged it into the breast of Marat. He had no power, either to defend himself or to evade the mortal blow. He merely exclaimed : ‘ *A moi, ma chère amie !* ’ and, in a few moments, breathed his last.

“ The outcry brought his pretended wife, and the infamous woman Théroigne into the room. They beheld Marat weltering in his blood, and the heroine standing beside with the knife in her hand. She was pale and motionless, and made no attempt to escape, as has been erroneously stated. The women, however, placed chairs and



tables against the door to prevent her going out, and then, throwing open the window, they called for help.

“ A man who was employed in folding some hand-bills in another room, was the first to enter. On seeing what had happened, and being informed who was the perpetrator of the deed, he seized a chair, and, striking at Charlotte Corday, felled her to the ground. But she raised herself up, and, with that fortitude which rendered her superior to any fate that might await her, she stood in silence, expecting the storm of popular fury to break over her head. It is indeed difficult to conceive what could have shielded her from the first movement of jacobinical indignation.”

“ I will here quote some passages from a report of the tragical event, drawn up by Chabot, by order of the Committee of Public Safety. This report, with all its falsehoods, is a higher eulogium on Charlotte Corday than anything I could say.”

“ When she was conducted to the Abbaye, the immense crowd, who were uttering yells of grief and indignation, dispersed at the desire of the commissioners who accompanied her. She fainted; but, in a few moments, recovered, and she said to the deputies :—

“ ‘ I thought they were going to tear me in pieces. Is it possible that these people, who have been described to me as so many cannibals,



obey with such docility the commands of their magistrates ?'

"Such," continues Chabot, "is the confidence of this woman in the speedy success of the projects of the counter-revolution, with which the insurgents have filled her head, that when her death is alluded to, she treats the matter with inconceivable contempt and indifference, though she had not sufficient courage to take her own life."

"What Chabot pronounces to be want of courage, was in fact the strongest proof of sublime courage and virtue. Charlotte Corday was too magnanimous to commit suicide. Chabot adds (and this is another falsehood) that, from information obtained by the Committee of Inspection relative to the plot, it was evident that the signal for attempting its execution was to be the assassination of the most energetic patriots ;—that it was hoped, by this means, to excite a violent movement in Paris, to arm the citizens against each other,—that, amidst these dissensions Wimpfen, Puysaie, and the departmental troops were to proclaim Louis XVII, to appoint as his council the fugitive deputies, and to dissolve the Convention.

"Chabot's report was listened to, in mournful silence, though, in their hearts, the Jacobins did not regret being rid of their ferocious leader. A deputation from the section of the Social Contract,



requested to be admitted to the bar ; and Gerault, who headed the deputation, thus addressed the Assembly :—

“ Representatives ! . . . Marat is no more ! . . . People ! you have lost your best friend ! . . . We have come to pay homage to the noble actions of his life . . David, where art thou ? . . . Thou hast transmitted to posterity the image of Le Pelletier dying for his country . . Thou hast now a subject for another picture.’

“ David, who was seated among us, now rose, and, with his sinister expression of countenance, and sharp piercing voice, said :—

“ ‘ I will endeavour to render justice to that subject.’

“ Having uttered these words, he resumed his seat amidst general applause. Gerault then continued, as follows :—

“ ‘ Legislators ! we implore you to make a law, applicable to present circumstances. The mode of execution at present in use, is not sufficiently appalling to avenge the atrocious assassination which has just been committed. Let us annihilate for ever the criminal and the crime. Show the French people the value you attach to human life ; and, instead of permitting it to be thus snapped like a thread, let the terror of torture disarm the parricidal hands which threaten the safety of the representatives of the People.’



“ A warm discussion ensued. On the motion of Chabot, which was supported by Julien de Toulouse, Denoncourt, Fauchet,\* and Duperret,† were accused. This accusation was the same thing as being sentenced to the guillotine, to which they were shortly afterwards brought. Marat was a deity, at whose altar none but human victims could be sacrificed.

“ In the course of the discussion, David addressed the Assembly as follows :—

“ ‘ On the day preceding the assassination of Marat, Maure and I were sent as deputies from the Jacobinical Club, to inquire after his health. We found him in the bath, at the side of which a piece of wood was fixed in such a manner as to serve him for a writing desk. Upon it was placed ink and paper, and Marat with his hand raised out of the bath, was noting down his last thoughts, for the welfare of the people. Yesterday, the surgeon who embalmed his body, sent to me to inquire in what manner we wished to expose it to the public in the church of the Cordeliers. He was wasted almost to a skeleton by the disease (the leprosy) with which he was afflicted. I think it

\* I have already mentioned Fauchet's crime :—it was having gained Charlotte Corday admittance to one of the tribunes of the National Convention.

† The charge against Duperret, was, having received a letter brought by Charlotte Corday from Barbaroux.



would be extremely interesting to present him as I saw him noting down his ideas for the welfare of the people.'

" Chabot moved that the members of the Convention should all attend the funeral of Marat ; and Bentabole proposed that the nation should pay the debts of the friend of the people.

" The impulse being now given, the most extravagant honours were paid to the memory of Marat. His friends were so reluctant to consign his remains to the grave, that, before they could resolve on the interment, the body was actually in a state of decomposition. It was laid in state, wrapt in a winding sheet, which afforded the spectators a distinct view of the form of the body. Poems were dedicated to his memory by our colleague Andouin, and by Cubières-Palmessaux.\* His bust was executed by Beauvalet,† who presented it to the Convention, and it decorated the hall of our sittings. The same honour was assigned to David's picture.‡ An altar was raised

\* The Chevalier Cubières was a protégé of the Queen, who brought him up and educated him. He became a Jacobin, and a disciple of Marat and Robespierre. The celebrated Madame Roland surnamed him *l'Apollon de l'échafaud*. He died after the restoration.

† Beauvalet was a sculptor of considerable talent. He was an enthusiastic Republican.

‡ This portrait, which is a perfect *chef-d'œuvre*, is in the possession of David's family. It has been twice offered for sale, and on both occasions, the high price demanded for it, (a hundred



to the *heart* of Marat, in the hall of the Cordeliers Club, and hymns, addressed to the heart, were sung alternately with hymns addressed to the Saviour: this sacrilege is perfectly characteristic of the impiety of the time. The Rue des Cordeliers changed its name to that of Marat, the Council General of the Commune ordered a festival in his honour, and he superseded Mirabeau in the Pantheon. Such are the vicissitudes of popular favour. The mob is ever ready to pull down its old gods, and to set up new ones in their stead.

“ Whilst the ceremonies of the Roman canonization were being renewed for the apotheosis of Marat, his friends were anxiously seeking those measures of revenge for which his death afforded them an excuse. The revolutionary tribunal went through the preliminaries of the trial of Charlotte Corday. The examinations commenced on the 19th of July, and the accused being conducted into court, underwent an interrogatory of which the following are the principal points.

“ ‘ Who directed you to Duparret ?’

“ ‘ Barbaroux.’

“ ‘ It appears, then, that you learned from

thousand francs) prevented it finding a purchaser. Madame de Morfontaine gave a hundred thousand francs for the purchase of her father's portrait, (likewise painted by David). It was hung in the Hall of the National Convention, along with that of Marat



the public journals that Marat was an anarchist ?’

“ ‘ Yes, I knew that he would ruin France. I have taken the life of one man, to save a hundred thousand . . . I was a republican before the revolution broke out.’

“ ‘ Did you not try whether or not you could strike a deadly blow before you committed this murder ?’

“ ‘ I am not an assassin.’

“ ‘ What have you to say in reply to these charges ?’

“ ‘ Nothing, except that I have succeeded.’

“ ‘ Who are the persons, by whose instigation you committed this murder ?’

“ ‘ The counsel of others could never have influenced me to commit the act. I alone conceived the project, and I alone have executed it. It is only in Paris that people are misled by a mistaken opinion of Marat : in the departments he was universally execrated.’

“ The examination being concluded, Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, spoke in support of the charge. The advocate, Chauveau-Lagarde,\*

\* Chauveau-Lagarde was the advocate who defended Charlotte Corday, Queen Marie-Antoinette, Madame Elizabeth, the Abbé Brottier, and M. de la Villeheurnois on their respective trials. The cross of the Legion of Honour, the cordon of Saint-Michael, and letters of nobility, (which certainly he needed not, being sufficiently noble without them,) were deemed adequate rewards



a citizen distinguished for his virtues and his generous independence of character, defended the accused. The following is a portion of his speech :

“ ‘ The accused candidly avows herself guilty of the horrible crime with which she stands charged. She confesses that she committed it after long premeditation ; she acknowledges many dreadful circumstances connected with the murder . . . . in short, she avows every thing, and does not seek to justify herself. This, citizens of the jury, is her defence. The imperturbable calmness of the accused, her total abnegation of self, her freedom from remorse, (though she stands, as I may say at the foot of the scaffold,) her sublime fortitude . . . . all appear to be beyond nature, and can be explained only by that excitement of political fanaticism, which armed her with the poignard. It is for you, citizens of the jury, to weigh this consideration in the scale of justice. I leave the question to your judgment.’

“ Chauveau-Lagarde having concluded his address, the jury retired to deliberate on their verdict. Whilst they were absent, Charlotte Corday turned to her advocate, and said :

“ ‘ You have defended me delicately and generously ; precisely in the manner I wished. I thank you, and I wish to give you a proof of my for him after the restoration. However, the respect of all Europe recompenses him for this ingratitude.



esteem. I have been informed that my property will be confiscated. I owe something to my prison, and I appoint you to pay my debt.'

" This was like the celebrated will of Eudamidas. The jury returned, and pronounced the sentence of death and confiscation. Charlotte Corday heard it unmoved. On her return to prison, she wrote her last letter, in which she renewed her expressions of gratitude to Chauveau-Lagarde. A constitutional priest was sent to assist her in her religious duties. She said to him mildly :

" ' Thank those who sent you for their attentions to me ; but I do not require your aid.'

" As she proceeded to the place of execution, a placid smile played on her lips, notwithstanding the insults with which the populace overwhelmed her. It is recorded in the *Moniteur* that, when she mounted the scaffold, her countenance retained its natural freshness of colour, and her whole appearance denoted a mind undisturbed. When the guillotine had performed its horrid task, a man named Legros, seized the head of the culprit to exhibit it to the people, and, in doing so, struck it several blows. This revolting outrage excited the murmurs of the spectators, and Legros was punished by the Tribunal of Police."

The above are the curious details given by Mercier on this interesting subject.

One evening, at the Arch-Chancellor's, the



conversation happened to turn on Charlotte Corday, and his Excellency informed us that, having a strong wish to see that extraordinary woman, he attended the Revolutionary Tribunal during her trial. He was struck with her beauty, her energy, and her resignation. She heard with contemptuous indifference the reproaches which Fouquier-Tinville heaped upon her. She stood in a simple and unaffected attitude, with her head cast down. After her condemnation, her mind was entirely withdrawn from worldly subjects ;—yet, she shewed no visible observance of religion.

Prince Cambacérès was of opinion that Charlotte Corday's mind had been deranged by reading the writings of Voltaire and the encyclopedists. She was a *philosopher* and a republican. She disdained the observance of the religious worship, in which she had been brought up. Some have described her as a royalist. That is a mistake. Her political opinions were well known at the time of her death.

As to the girl, Renaud, of whom Robespierre, by way of a speculation, attempted to make a second Charlotte Corday, she was anything but a heroine. But her death was necessary to enhance Robespierre's value in the eyes of the Jacobins, and, therefore, the incorruptible patriot scrupled not to immolate her and all her family on the scaffold. It was an atrocious affair, and it roused the indignation of every honest man in France.



I asked Prince Cambacérès whether the Emperor adopted any particular precautions to defend himself against assassination.

“ I assure you,” replied the Prince, “ he never bestowed a thought on such a thing. You, yourself know with what facility any one might enter the Tuileries.”

“ I know,” replied I, “ that neither on my first, nor on my last visit, did any one inquire my name, my rank, nor even question my right to appear there. Any well-dressed person arriving in a carriage, might have gained access to the *salle des maréchaux*, or even to the *salon bleu*. There any one might, with perfect ease, have assassinated the Emperor, by making the sacrifice of his own life; and such fanatics are not wanting.”

“ The Emperor,” observed the Prince, “ was alike unguarded in Paris, in the country, or when with the army. He never felt the least apprehension for himself, whatever others might feel for him. He would mount his horse, and ride here and there, with little, or even no escort. He trusted to his star; firmly persuaded that he was a man of Fate, and that Fate would protect him as far as might be necessary for the fulfilment of her decrees. Napoleon was essentially a fatalist. On this subject, his faith was almost childish. Fatality, in his belief, ruled the world. Thus, he was never very fearful of conspiracies. He used to say he was not *fated* to be their victim. This



feeling rendered him venturous beyond all parallel, and inspired him with courage almost superhuman. When I now hear him accused of cowardice, I am more inclined to laugh than to be angry.... It is ever thus! Mankind will never confess that they have adored the idol after having broken it; whilst, before its destruction, they could not offer sufficient incense to it."

This subject led us into a lengthened conversation. Prince Cambacérès and I adverted to the conduct of some of the imperial chamberlains, who had been so humble, so willing to bow their necks to the yoke of Napoleon, and who had the baseness to revile him in the royalist fever that had seized them since his downfall. There was one in particular, who the Prince told me, had once paid the most assiduous court to him, (Cambacérès.) He had not seen him since the return of the King, because this *gentilhomme* of the old régime had contrived to work himself into the household of a Prince of the Bourbon family. Prince Cambacérès had occasion to write to this person, upon some business of no very weighty importance, and he addressed to him a friendly note, couched in the familiar style in which they had been in the habit of corresponding. To this note, he received the following answer :

"The ——— presents his compliments to M. Cambacérès. His opinions preclude him from



visiting any but persons who are devoted to the government, and to the amiable family of the Sovereign. He was not aware of being so well acquainted with M. de Cambacérès, that the latter should feel warranted in addressing him in those friendly terms which are appropriate only between persons possessing congenial opinions. He, therefore, regrets that he can neither call on M. de Cambacérès, nor promise to serve him in the way he requests. Perhaps, at some future time, when M. de Cambacérès shall have given pledges of his fidelity to the royal family, the obstacles, now existing, may be removed. Till then, it will be prudent to suspend a correspondence, which, to say the least of it, is indiscreet."

" (Signed,) The \_\_\_\_\_."

" Paris, August 8th, 1814."

" Monseigneur," I exclaimed, when I perused this letter, " will you not inflict on this man the just punishment of stigmatizing him by the recollection of the past? Why not have this letter framed and hung up in your drawing-room, so that every body may see this flagrant turpitude?"

" Bah!" replied the Prince, " I have already seen many and shall probably see many more examples of this kind. Such trifles do not annoy me. The man is a contemptible blockhead, unworthy of notice, and I know very well that when-



ever the wind changes he will again cringe at my feet."

"Impossible, Monseigneur! after having written that letter."

"Oh! he will forget it, if it be his interest to do so. He will even deny it, if need be."

I shook my head doubtfully; for I was unable to conceive the possibility of such a combination of effrontery and meanness. However, the events of 1815 made me a little wiser. I cannot refrain from acquainting the reader with the sequel of the story relative to the chamberlain.

The 20th of March arrived. Louis XVIII and the royal family quitted France. Prince Cambacérès was urged to leave his retirement by the express wish of Napoleon; he found himself compelled to resume his title of Arch-Chancellor, and to accept provisionally the portfolio of the Minister of Justice. A week had scarcely elapsed after these changes, when one morning I went to pay my respects to the Prince. After a little conversation, he smiled and said to me:

"Léon, I know that you are curious in autographs. Take this to enrich your collection."

He presented to me a letter under an envelope. On the seal was a coat of arms. I unfolded the letter, and was astonished on reading the following lines:



“ Monseigneur,

“ Never was my heart animated by joy more sincere than that excited by your happy return of fortune. Nothing but the infatuation which took possession of me, could have made me doubt, for a moment, that His Majesty the Emperor and King, would resume the sceptre which he has endowed with so much glory. Your serene Highness is now restored to that high post which affords you the opportunity of doing so much good. I feel most proud of the many acts of kindness Monseigneur has conferred on me ; and I will speedily lay at his feet the homage of my most respectful devotedness and of the unalterable esteem with which, Monseigneur, I have the honour to be, Your Serene Highness’s most humble servant.”

Then followed the signature, which I scarcely need mention was that of the chamberlain who, in 1814, had so impertinently answered the request of a friendly act of service.

“ Did I not tell you how it would be ?” said Prince Cambacérès.

“ Alas, Monseigneur ! I am confounded, both at the fact itself and its possibility . . . . But, thank heaven ! men are not all of this stamp . . . . And how does your Highness mean to treat this fellow ?”

“ I will wait till he comes ; for I know he will come. I will receive him coldly. He will bear it.



He will come twice a week, then four times, then seven times ; until at length, by dint of seeing him often, I shall forget the past, and perhaps some day or other prefer him to the men who are most faithfully devoted to me. *Ainsi va le monde !* We are all the creatures of habit, and three-fourths of that which we are apt to call friendship, is nothing but the reiterated contact of two heterogeneous bodies. But, though the spark may kindle in both at once and with equal power, yet they will never thoroughly unite, and be animated by the same sentiments."

I could not help assuring the Prince that, were I in his place, I should banish from my presence the man who could be guilty of such grovelling meanness.

"That would only be adding one more to the number of my enemies," replied he ; "and where would be the use of that ? By treating him with civility, I shall render him harmless. Believe me, it is best to tack about, and not to steer too adventurously in the face of the wind. He who does that may be driven on the rock on which he will break. Besides, who can answer for the soundness of our vessel ? The prudent man always distrusts his own strength and power, and will never risk them unnecessarily."

I feel pleasure in noting down these maxims, the precious fruits of the experience of Prince Cambacérès. There are few situations in life on which he had not meditated, and on which he could



not give excellent advice. As to the chamberlain, he made his appearance, fluttered for a while round the Prince ; then, being endowed with a keen scent, he kept himself aloof ; and, after the battle of Waterloo, he was seen no more. Since 1830, he has become one of the most assiduous courtiers at the Tuileries.

There is another gentleman, of the same class, whose adventures I may briefly recount. He was originally known in Paris as a servant of Louis XVI. After the 6th of October, he became one of the adherents of the Duke of Orleans, whom he speedily deserted to convince Robespierre that, like David, *he would taste the hemlock with him*. The 9th Thermidor took him rather by surprise, but, as he was the relative of Barras, he went with his cousin to rejoice at the victory over the Jacobins, and to pay his devoirs at the Luxembourg. Being shrewd enough to foresee Bonaparte's elevated fortune, he paid his court to him on the 18th Brumaire, and, as a matter of course, was afterwards received at the Tuileries. There he found himself in his element, and there he continued swimming in smooth water, until Josephine's divorce was determined on. After this, he solicited the favour of being permitted to join the escort which was to conduct Maria-Louisa to France. All now went on well ; and he was devoted to the service of the imperial family. But Providence again decreed a change. Napoleon



sustained reverses in the north ; our courtier foresaw the Restoration, and hazarded a letter to Louis XVIII, who, in 1814, conceded to him the privilege of styling himself an *ancien royaliste*. During the Hundred Days, he was confined by the gout : but he sent his eldest son to Ghent, and the younger one to meet Napoleon. The Emperor fell a second time, and our *ancien royaliste* again threw himself at the feet of the King with a certificate from Doctor Recamier. The Capetian dynasty being consolidated, he sued for the pardon of his unworthy son. Afterwards, he deserted M. de Blacas, to join the party of M. de Decazes ; and he left the latter for M. de Villèle, on whom he also turned his back, during the brief interval of the Vicomte de Martignac's power. He had already begun his genuflections before Prince Polignac, when the three days arrived. Who can describe the fatigue he underwent in hurrying to General Dubourg, who was doing everything, then to the Duke de Choiseul who was doing nothing, then to Lafayette, Laffitte, Guizot, and others who gave the work its finishing touch ? At length, he lighted on the staircase of the Palais-Royal, where he has since taken root. M. de Talleyrand, who knows him well, said :—" For the last forty years, we have never lost sight of M. P——. I feel sure of seeing him at my back whenever I turn round. He is like my shadow."

The Memoirs of M. P—— would form a



romance, worthy to be a pendant to that of *Le Sage*. He might justly be surnamed the *Gil Blas* of the *Revolutions*.

Society is overrun by these political weather-cocks, who turn with every change of wind. They furnish useful materials for reflection. But a truce to the subject. Whilst I write, I frequently repeat to myself, by way of admonition, this well known line :—

“ *L'ennui naquit un jour de l'uniformité !* ”

The letters which I have quoted above, and which are so perfectly characteristic of the meanness of the writer, bring to my recollection some others which I will likewise submit to the reader's perusal. The first is penned by a lady, a relative of the Comtesse de C———. She was descended from a parliamentary family, who had received titles of nobility about the year 1709. Her husband was a country gentleman of small fortune, who, previously to the first revolution, had held some trivial appointment.... I cannot furnish any further details. When the letter was first communicated to me, I pledged myself not to disclose the names of any of the parties concerned. I do not consider myself released from this pledge. The epistle, which is addressed to Count C——— and dated 1806, is as follows—



“ My dear nephew,

“ Ernest torments me to let him go to Paris. He is eager to see the world and to push his fortune. I cannot thwart his inclination ; and he will set out in a few days, carrying with him this letter. Ernest is twenty-two years of age, and in the enjoyment of perfect health ; consequently, I have had not a little trouble to obtain for him leave to quit the army on the plea of a pulmonary affection. He is a prodigious favourite with the ladies, married as well as single. He is a good dancer and a good fencer ; he plays the violin and paints flowers admirably. I feel assured that *Bonaparte* would consider himself happy in giving an appointment to a young gentleman so accomplished and so highly connected. He would be satisfied by being made a Prefect. Poor fellow ! his modesty is amusing. I hope that, in the first instance, he will be made a counsellor of state ; for he cannot seek a military commission. By dint of proper application, it would be easy to obtain something from people who should really consider themselves too happy to be associated with us. Ernest's great-grandfather was on the point of purchasing the appointment of *président à mortier* in the Parliament of ——. I have in my possession all the correspondence which took place on this subject. His father would like to see him a chamberlain



or an ambassador, and his uncle, the *grand-vicaire*, thinks we should do well to make him study the law, so that he might be fitted for some judicial appointment. The good old man does not reflect that the post of *avocat-général* would be beneath the talents of Ernest; and that, perhaps, if he wished to be *procureur-général*, it might be objected that he has not been regularly inscribed. Such an obstacle, absurd as it is, ought to be removed.

“ Though Ernest is very young, I should wish to see him married, if an advantageous match should present itself. See whether there is not some relative of *Bonaparte*, who might bring him, as a dowry, one of those Duchies which will soon be distributed, and afterwards the grand cordon of the legion of honour; for, as to the mere ribbon, I have forbidden his acceptance of it. Napoleon cannot fail to offer it to him as soon as he shall know that he is a friend of the Marquis de X———. I should be sorry to see him, by the acceptance of that paltry decoration, make himself the equal of those low born soldiers, who, I understand, have now become great men. I must likewise acquaint you that I am exerting influence abroad with Monseigneur the Bishop of Arras,\*

\* De Couzie, Bishop of Arras, died an emigrant in London. He was a confidential friend of the Count d'Artois, afterwards Charles X.



to obtain for my son the cross of Saint-Louis from his legitimate King.

“ This circumstance, together with the annoyances to which we should be subjected here in our country residence, through an alliance with the *Bonapartes*, render it advisable that the said marriage should be secret. Napoleon has too much good sense to disapprove of this ; besides, the honour of the alliance will induce him to overlook this little difficulty. The marriage in Paris will not be the less valid, because it has not been made public in this part of the country.

“ I entreat that you will use your interest in behalf of my dear boy. Accompany him when he calls on M. Cambacérès with the letter I have given him. M. Cambacérès will, I am assured, seize every opportunity of evincing his gratitude to my family. M. Gras—— used to invite him to dinner twice a year, from 1783 to 1797. He once travelled from Beziers to Castelmaudary in the *bateau de poste*, and my mother-in-law was on the point of going with him. He did not know her, it is true ; but still there are recollections which can never be effaced.

“ Adieu, my dear nephew. All the family are in excellent health. My husband saw his son depart with regret. He would like to go with him ; but then he must have a motive ; and, to speak candidly, I do not really know what he could ask for. A man who filled the post



of *Avocat du Roi* for three years, under the old régime, has a right to be fastidious. His brother, who retired from the military service in 1776, and who distinguished himself in so brilliant a way last year in the drawing of the militia, has told Ernest that he will accept the command of a regiment. Ernest will talk to M. Cambacérès on the subject. It will be a good opportunity for raising the dignity of the present army by the introduction of an old officer of noble family. With regard to myself, I should not feel quite satisfied in superseding Madame de la Rochefoucauld, as lady of honour to the Empress Josephine ; and, as she is not likely to resign her post, I shall stay where I am. I am not ambitious, as you may perceive, from my humble wishes concerning Ernest.

“ I remain, my dear nephew, &c.

“ Comtesse de Ger——.

“ P.S.—I forgot to mention that the brother of Manon,\* wishes to obtain a situation at court : it must be something good, for we all respect him here. I should like, on New Year’s Day, to have a surprise in readiness for that excellent man, the Abbé Lumer——, if *Bonaparte* would but let him have the neighbouring bishoprick,

\* The lady’s femme de chambre.



which will soon be vacant. Try whether you cannot obtain some indemnity for our nephew D——— ; though we cannot say he lost any thing by the revolution. Yet the indemnity would produce a good effect, and attach many friends to the government. If *Bonaparte* and *M. Cambacérès* should wish to see my letter, you may shew it to them. They like frankness, and I express my feelings honestly.”

I will now present to the reader an epistle which I received from a near relative of my own, a grave old gentleman, who had filled a magisterial post for the space of forty years.

“ It is reported here that a plan for a new judicial organization is being prepared in profound secrecy ; and that every precaution is taken to prevent the public knowing any thing of the matter. All persons connected with the magistracy are on the tip-toe of curiosity, and would pay any price for the least information on the subject. From what I hear of the obstacles raised against public curiosity, there is little hope of hearing any thing. Yet, my dear —— you may readily conceive how grateful I should be, if I could give *our gentlemen* here any intelligence of that which is a sealed letter to us at present. Could you not procure me some information at the Chancellor’s office ? . . . perhaps, from the



keeper of the seals, or even from one of the clerks. The pleasure of obliging so devoted a magistrate as myself, might possibly unbind His Excellency's tongue. The information shall be kept profoundly secret from all except *the gentlemen* to whom I have alluded."

I confess I read this letter twice before I could believe the evidence of my eyes. It is certainly a curious specimen of provincial simplicity. I am tempted to transcribe one more letter of the same description. It is written by a candidate for admission to the French Academy, and one who has since obtained the honour of wearing the green costume. The letter was addressed to me at a time when I thought I could count seven sincere friends among the forty. It is as follows :—

" Sir,

" Since you will not be my competitor for the redoubtable chair in the French Academy—since your amiable modesty acknowledges the superiority of my talent, I am induced to request that you will infuse into the minds of your numerous friends, some portion of the kind admiration with which you regard me. Will you be my patron? To act such a part, must be both gratifying and honourable to you; to quote a line of Corneille applicable to the occasion, I may say :

" De pareils candidats n'ont de chefs qu'en idée."



“ Without affecting a vanity, which is far from my heart, but merely for the sake of that truth to which you and I ought to render homage, I may tell you that Europe is surprised, or I should rather say indignant, at seeing me so long kept at the gate of the sanctuary. The fair sex, in particular, are amazed at the severity of the academicians. I am fully aware that it would not be very agreeable to those gentlemen to see me all at once the *Prince of the Senate*; though I must inevitably attain that honour by the merit of my works. They have already been translated into every living language. The Turks recite them whilst they sip their coffee. At Venice, the lays of Tasso and Ariosto are no longer heard: my poems have superseded them. I feel pained that I should be compelled to tell you this.

“ I have not ventured to give the slightest hint to M. de Lormion, and I will tell you why I have refrained. Having, on a recent occasion, when we were alone together, addressed to him one of those elegant compliments which poets sometimes hazard towards each other, he exclaimed, seizing me by the collar: ‘ Monsieur, if to-morrow you insert this in one of the journals and attach your name to it, I promise you that on the day after to-morrow, my vote shall be yours.’ This proposition was embarrassing, I am unwilling to offend M. de Lormion, and, on the other hand, I attach too high a value to public



esteem to allow it to be supposed that I have one or several superiors. Will you, Sir, advocate my cause to this academician? Assure him of my admiration; and tell him that I consider him to have surpassed the two poets he has translated, (Tasso and Ossian.) But abstain from all comparison between him and me. By this means, you will avoid sinning against sincerity; for, if you consider me superior to yourself who possess so much talent, you cannot possibly rank M. Lormion above me.

“ Tell M. Guirard, that I have read his tragedy; this will gratify him. If I were to see it performed, I regret to say, that the opposition expressed by the audience would prevent me from applauding so as to encourage him by a suffrage, which I know he would highly prize.

“ M.M. Jouy and Parceval are exceedingly friendly to me. They are not my rivals. Therefore, they are devoid of envy. As to M. ———, whose mosaic literature belongs to the whole world, he irritated me so much the other day, that I apprehend his negative vote. His mania of eulogizing all Parnassus annoys me. Speak to him; soothe his jealous feeling. Point out to him that he may still hold a high rank, though far beneath me.

“ Thiers may make M. V——— believe that his suffrage in my favour would throw me a thousand leagues in the rear of him. This would



be a master-stroke. But I am informed that, since the day of his reception, he has wished to close the Academy, and that, consequently, he will put a black ball into the urn. He will not retract this determination. No matter ;—do all you can, and go as far as possible without compromising me. I am aware, too, that in speaking of me, he made this remark : ‘ I am watching him ; and, if I see a good opportunity, I will trample on, and crush him.’

“ Your two other friends will listen to reason. They see the altitude to which I am soaring ; and they are not inclined to encounter a contest. In return for this, I promise them the immortality which my verses will confer on them. You, too, deserve the like reward, and I will take an early opportunity of addressing an epistle to you. Will you challenge me by an ode ? I will furnish you with a few hints of what you ought to say. I am quite of the opinion of our friend M. ———, who says : ‘ *every man ought to attend to his own affairs.*’ He said without ceremony the other day to a poet who promised to write something complimentary upon him : ‘ Send your effusion to me, and I will correct it. Who can appreciate so well as myself the eulogies I deserve ?’ Now, Sir, it appears to me that there is a very laudable degree of candour in these words. Is it so extraordinary that we should be able to appreciate ourselves ? I assure you, I was not convinced of my own worthiness to stand at the head of our



literature, until after I had maturely reflected, and compared myself with others. If the Vicomte de Châteaubriand had written in verse, I should have ranged myself by his side. But poetry disdains prose. If I gain admittance to the Academy, I shall be satisfied: if I should owe my reception to you, that favour will add another link to our friendship.

“ Receive every assurance of my regard; it is imperishable, like the poetic crown which encircles my brow.

“ (Signed,) ———— ”

I have often regretted that I did not receive this missive in the life-time of Prince Cambacérès: it would have greatly amused him, and we should have enjoyed a hearty laugh at it together. The Prince detested that literary vanity, of which the above letter affords so curious a specimen. He had a poor opinion of those bombastic writers whom he used to compare to finely decorated balloons, inflated with air. His pure taste led him to admire simplicity; and he held in aversion every thing like extravagance and affectation. He reprobated the romantic style, which was gaining ground so rapidly. His taste had been formed on the finest literary models, and he had an intimate knowledge of the best Greek and Latin authors.

At the evening *réunions* of Prince Cambacérès, discussions frequently arose on the comparative



merits of the writers of the old and new schools. Among the literary characters assembled one evening, there was a M. de C——, a very caustic personage, and a most bitter and severe critic. Just as I entered, Prince Cambacérès was saying:

“Monsieur C——, pray who is this Victor Hugo who is making so much noise just now?”

“He is a mere youth, Monseigneur.”

“But he writes poetry; and he has a host of enthusiastic admirers.”

“Well, then, he is a *sublime* youth if you will. But I fear he will lose himself in the extravagant flights he is taking to gratify his ill-judging admirers. He undoubtedly possesses talent; but he is utterly destitute of invention. He turns round and round upon the same idea. He wishes to be a literary legislator; but he will continually vary his poetic code, for he wants the stability of genius.”

“He appears to be quite a neologist,” said Prince Cambacérès, (this remark was made in 1818.)

“Yes, Monseigneur, he mistakes eccentricity for imagination. But, in spite of his faults, he will be the founder of a sect. However, M. Hugo is not the first who opened the tract upon which he has entered, and into which he is enticing others to follow him. In the last century, you and I recollect Retif de la Bretonne and Mercier, who adopted the romantic style; and they had



Saint-Amand for their leader, and Voltaire for their precursor ;— for Voltaire was the first who turned to the use of art that which was out of nature. He was ambitious, not only to touch the heart, but also to divert the eye. He sowed the seeds of the melodrama in *Zaïre*, *Sémiramis*, *Olympie* and *Tancrède* ; but his exquisite taste kept him within bounds. Then there was the bombastic Diderot, who, because he had an indefatigable pen and tongue, fancied himself a man of genius—a mistake which was likewise shared by his contemporaries. Diderot wished to subvert the rules ; he wrote against them, and, according to perpetual custom, he made his theory apply to his own effusions.

“ Romanticism, as I have said, is not newly born. M. Nepomucene Lemercier had his turn in this class of writing, before Victor Hugo was heard of. He wrote a play, the first act of which was in Italy, the second in Spain, and the third on the sea. His innovation was hissed. Do you know why ? At that period, men at our time of life had not fallen into an absurdity similar to that committed by our fathers, who set up the philosophers in lieu of a King. Since 1814, an attempt has been made to establish a still more ridiculous domination ; I mean the domination of *blanc-becs*....of school-boys. The *Constitutionnel* and all the journals of that cast, are every day lauding to the skies these beardless poets and



patriots. They are so eulogized for their works, that they blush to pursue their studies. A finished education is no longer thought of. At present, all this is merely ridiculous, but, by and bye, it will be a serious misfortune.

“ These youths, who are continually told they are men of genius, really think themselves such ; for how can they doubt the sincerity of praise which comes from men whose understandings they respect, and whom they believe too honest to deceive them. They entertain a thorough conviction of their own superiority ; and, when they find their first productions attract no notice, they blame, not their own want of talent, but the indifference or unfairness of the public. Mental dejection succeeds to disappointment. They expected fame, fortune and happiness ; and they find their hopes are vain illusions. To awake from these illusions, would be too painful : they prefer eternal sleep ; and thus they are driven by their own vanity, and the adulation of others, to the crime of suicide. This mode of ending existence is becoming daily more frequent, and bids fair to become quite an epidemic. Ah, Monseigneur ! how criminal are the flatterers of youthful talent ! What will they have to answer for when the tree they have planted shall bear its fruit ? . . . . But, to return to M. Hugo. He certainly possesses talent, though he wants the greatest of all talent—invention. I fear he will not be able to create for himself ; though I



believe he is not the man to avail himself wholly of the labour of others, and I have no doubt he is fully imbued with the truth of the precept: 'Help thyself, and God will help thee.' "

" Ah, Monsieur!" said I to M. C ———, when at length there came a pause, " how severe you are upon this poor world! You would close the path against innovation."

M. C ———, instead of replying, shrugged his shoulders, took up his hat, bowed, and went away.

" You have raised up an enemy to yourself," observed the Prince.

" How could that simple observation have given offence?"

" He supposes you to be imbued with the principles of the new school, and he rejects them with the same fanaticism which others evince in religion and politics. He is one of that class of persons whose maxim is: '*Hors des règles, point de salut.*' "

" Well, if he had stayed a little while, I should have raised that conservative cry along with him."

" Then you are not an admirer of the new school of literature?"

" No, and for this reason. It has laid down rules, before it has furnished models. In all things, except reading a book, the right way is to begin at the beginning. Let us see romanticists produce



master-pieces which will dim the glory of our old divinities, then we shall be their sectarians by compulsion. And one day or other a Horace, a Vida, or a Boileau will step in to bridle extravagance, and to teach genius to hover within the confines of reason and taste."

"It is certain," observed the Prince, "that romanticism is not a creation of the present day."

"By no means," said I. "Our contemporary writers are merely disfiguring all that is good in it. They run into all sorts of extravagancies and hope that their faults will be mistaken for beauties. I doubt whether this style will outlive a quarter of a century. If it survive for half a century, and I live till then, I may apply to it the line which Racine puts into the mouth of Mithridates :—

"Et mes derniers regards ont vu fuir les Romains."

The Prince smiled and said :

"I saw the birth of this mongrel literature. Diderot approved it, and Retif and Mercier professed it. They were both men of genius and vanity ; they were incapable of bridling their unfortunate facility, and they totally disregarded study. Retif always appeared to me a maniac. By what other term can one designate the man, who, under pretence of observing mankind, mingles with the lowest classes of society, and who, not content with this, compelled his wife and



daughters to participate in his degrading associations? There is no name by which one can characterize an extravagance of this kind. And this was not an error committed once in a moment of thoughtlessness. His works comprise two hundred volumes, and they present pictures of human turpitude calculated to inspire disgust, not only against the works but their author.

“ I knew Retif very well. He was a handsome man, but always very dirty and ill-dressed. Whenever I saw him, I used to be tempted to make the remark which Aristippes made to Diogenes :— *I see vanity through the holes of your cloak.* His vanity prompted him to be jealous even of the eminent writers, who lived before he was born. He could not endure any praise which was not addressed to himself. It was strange that, though he himself would readily praise Mercier, yet he would not pardon any one else for expressing admiration of that writer. When he heard Mercier depreciated, then he would take up his defence with pleasure. He loved to be thought generous, and to deal to every one their share of praise ; but then he wished others to award praise to him exclusively. If Homer, Racine, or Milton were quoted in his presence, his brow contracted, and he darted angry glances at the *fool*, the *patriot*, (these were his usual terms of reproach) who had rendered the tribute of admiration due to those great men. I have seen him act in this way



fifty times. The success of his *Paysan* and his *Paysanne* completely turned his head. The *Contemporaines* is a very clever collection, and his *Nuits de Paris* are the offspring of a brilliant imagination. All these works, though blemished by gross faults, nevertheless bear traces of singular talent, and are well worth reading."

I had read the writings of Retif, and my opinion of them perfectly coincided with that of Prince Cambacérès. Respecting his personal appearance, I can say nothing ; for I never saw him. He died just before I arrived in Paris.

" Among the writers who took up the defence of good taste, there is one very celebrated, of whom I shall say a few words. I allude to Marie-Joseph Chenier : it is necessary to mention his christian names to distinguish him from his poetic brother André, of whom I shall by and bye speak. Marie-Joseph was not very fond of speaking of his adulatory tragedy entitled : *Le Couronnement de Cyrus*, which he wrote in compliment to Napoleon. On this subject, I shall presently relate an amusing anecdote. I am now about to mention another of his works, and the storm it conjured over his head.

Chenier soon felt that the path of flattery was ill suited to him and to the nature of his genius, which was essentially republican. He hastened to recover his independence, and he proclaimed his return to his old principles by the publication of his *Epître*



*à Voltaire*, a masterpiece of taste, energy, fancy, courage, malice and impiety. The devout anathematized it, and the indifferent (who form by far the greatest number) read it with avidity. I was made acquainted with this production before it was presented to the public. Chenier had read it to me. I listened to it with profound attention, and when he arrived at its close, I asked him whether he really intended to publish it.

“Certainly I do,” he replied, “and it will appear to-morrow.”

“Well, when you rise, the day after to-morrow, you may put your night-cap in your pocket ; for rest assured that, you will sleep in the Temple that night.”

“What ! without a trial ?”

“I tell you, you will sleep in the Temple. Napoleon will never pardon such independence.”

“I am of opinion,” observed Chenier, “that Napoleon is too young for this ancient sort of tyranny. At his age, the part of Tiberius would be inappropriate. He must postpone that till a future time. Besides, I have to expiate the eulogies which I addressed to him. This epistle is an act of political and literary contrition.”

In spite of its good object, the publication seemed to be a very hazardous step. Madame de Fars, Madame de Lesparda and myself, endeavoured to prevail on him to change his resolution. But Chenier was an obstinate repub-



lican, and, moreover, a poet : he would have his own way.

On the publication of the Epistle, the Emperor expressed a wish to see it. Its commencement displeased him exceedingly.

“ These lines,” said he, to Count Regnauld, who had presented the publication to him, in the hope of mitigating the first ebullition of the imperial anger, “ these lines are out of place. Why make this bitter attack upon me, at the very moment when I am seeking to establish public morals, and to consolidate religion, which is their basis ? It would appear, that our poets are anxious to perpetuate the ill opinion entertained of the French people in Europe. Must we be charged with impiety because it has pleased Parny, Chenier and Ginguené to insult the religion which we ought to revere ?”

“ Sire,” observed Regnauld, “ the works of the writers you have just mentioned are merely effusions of wit and humour, and afford no ground of alarm.”

“ That is a mistake. I look on them as extremely dangerous. They accustom the rising generation, by whom they are read, to regard with ridicule all that is most respectable.”

“ But, Sire, according to the constitution of the state, freedom of religious worship, and consequently freedom of religious discussion, are permitted in France.”



“ This indefinite freedom of discussion leads to atheism. Besides, *I reign by the grace of God* : if there be no God, on what does my sovereign title rest ? There is a close and mysterious alliance between the throne and religion. If the latter be attacked, the other will soon be in danger. I should never have been seated on my throne, had I not commenced by raising up the altar. Chenier is very culpable, he fills a post in the Imperial University ; and he exercises a direct influence over the youth who are educated there. Certainly, their parents must be dissatisfied with the principles he promulgates.”

Count Regnauld knew not what answer to make to this. The Emperor continued reading the Epistle, sometimes praising the energy and originality of the ideas, and sometimes making gestures of disapproval. . . . When he arrived at the following lines, he uttered them with a marked alteration of voice :—

Tout passe, tout s'éteint, les conquérans périssent,  
Sur le front des héros les lauriers se flétrissent ;

\* \* \* \* \*

Le pouvoir absolu s'efforcerait en vain  
D'anéantir l'esprit né d'un souffle divin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tacite en traits de flamme accuse nos Séjans,  
Et son nom prononcé fait pâlir les tyrans.

“ Monsieur Regnauld,” exclaimed his Majesty,



“ your friend is resolved to make me his enemy ! Have I reason to fear Tacitus ? Are my ministers to be compared to Sejanus ? Do not suppose that I will tolerate such insolence : four good walls shall keep the jacobin under restraint. Send for the minister of police immediately.”

“ Sire, why employ the minister of the police in this affair ? Your severity will only confer importance on a work which has none of its own. Take no notice of it, and it will soon be forgotten.”

“ No, Sir, lines like those which I have just read, are long remembered. Besides, they are from the pen of a popular poet. Chenier is a powerful sovereign declaring war against me.”

“ Spare, at least, the imprisonment. May I venture to observe, Sire, that posterity, which will see so much to admire in you, will never approve the persecution of talent.”

Count Regnauld always spoke frankly and honestly, and the Emperor, who knew his devotedness, was never offended at his bluntness of manner.

“ It would seem, from the earnestness of your intercession,” said Napoleon, “ that you, too, stand in awe of the poet.”

“ Pardon me, Sire, I appreciate Chenier as his talents deserve ; it is your Majesty who fears him.

“ To punish him is not to fear him. I would punish him because he attacks God and his sove-



reign. And then the lines against Prince Talleyrand, what do you think of them? . . . . What insults! what personalities! . . . . And the affectation of always repeating the name of the Republic. The Republic is no more. A royalist who conspires now-a-days is less culpable than a Republican."

The conversation was maintained in this way until the arrival of Fouché. As soon as he entered, the Emperor began to reproach him for not having prohibited the publication of the Epistle to Voltaire.

"What are you thinking about? What are your police agents doing?"—were the concluding words of his philippic.

"Sire," replied Fouché, without hesitation, "we are intent on defeating the hostile schemes which England is directing against your person. I do not consider crazy poets worthy of such serious attention, and, as you are not a Tiberius, I do not see why I should consider myself a Sejanus."

"Who informed you that I would not punish such insolence despotically. . . A prison shall be my answer."

"All Paris would be thrown into excitement to effect his liberation. He is not a popular favorite now; but in prison he would become an object of commiseration. Believe me, it is dangerous to render one's enemies interesting."



In spite of his ill humour, Napoleon could not refrain from smiling.

“ I should be very loth to render Chenier interesting,” said he. . . . “ Well, let him be deprived of his post at the University. . . The man who outrages religion is unfit to preside over the education of youth.”

There was no possibility of obtaining a remission of this sentence. Chenier lost his situation. He was not rich ; but he spent what he had like a prince. His reverse of fortune could not tempt him to be guilty of any meanness. When I saw him after the loss of his place, he said :—

“ Do you know, I narrowly escaped sleeping where you told me I should ? But I have only been deprived of my means of subsistence :—this is a strange way to force me to approve of bigots and tyrants.”



## CHAPTER VII.

Count Regnauld de Saint-Jean d'Angely—His portrait and character—Special value set upon him by Napoleon—Sharp and unpublished sayings of the Emperor—Count Regnauld in 1814—The five assassinations—Romantic chapter in the life of a counsellor of state—Poison and chocolate, an anecdote of the days of the Empire—Baron de Puymaurin—M. de C.....—Story of an imperial spy, related by M. de Puymaurin—Incredible and disinterested language of M. Benoit, an ex-minister of state—Conversation with Cambacérès on the probable return of Napoleon—Unpublished letter of the latter written at the close of 1814—Tribulations of an ex-grand dignitary—The female chapter, an anecdote of the restoration—The dearly paid bride's clothes of a maiden espoused without a portion—Persons going a-begging—The actress and the window—A beggar who has lost his memory ; stories of the present day—The Emperor and a grognard—Unpublished and anecdotal letters of Napoleon to Josephine concerning the battle of Austerlitz—The black leg and the joke, a fantastic anecdote.

“ ON this day,” said Count de Saint-Jean d'Angely, as he was walking with me after dining



with Prince Cambacérès, who still resided at his hotel in the Rue Saint-Dominique, “on this day, many years ago, a singular adventure occurred to me. A partiality for the fair sex, has ever been laid to my charge. But, on what objects can we more appropriately bestow our affections? I consider them the master piece of nature; and, assuredly, when I contemplate a woman in all the splendour of her beauty, I cannot see in her the work of chance, but must fain confess the hand of a God who can alone have created her.. You smile, mischievous Sir.”

“I only admire, Monseigneur, how, from the love of the creature, you are brought to admit the existence of the Creator. Your Excellency is in the right road to salvation, and I rejoice at it.”

“A truce to jesting, for I am serious; I am neither a bigot, nor a jansenist; but, when I reflect....my friend, either the impressions of youth possess an overwhelming power, or something develops itself within us, when the passions are blunted, and forcibly recalls us to those altars which we had pulled down through sheer giddiness in bygone days of prosperity and folly.”

This language was too pleasing to me not to claim all my approbation. Count Regnauld is one of the men of the Revolution whose merits have been least estimated at their true value; by his enemies only has his biography been formed:



if we except what has been inserted in the work entitled *Biography of Contemporaries*,\* he has

\* Count Michel-Louis Etienne Regnauld de Saint-Jean d'Angely, was born in 1760, of a noble family, and held, previously to 1789, the rank of lieutenant of the provostship of the navy, at Rochefort; he was indebted to his talents for being appointed to the states-general by the *tiers-état*. He always held monarchical, prudent and honourable opinions. Proscribed on the 10th of August, he escaped the axe of the executioner. He was arrested after the 31st of August 1793; his life was saved by the event of the 9th Thermidor. Bound to Napoleon by ties of friendship as early as 1796, he followed him to Italy and Malta, where he remained, with the power of a viceroy, under the modest title of commissary of the French Republic. He laboured to promote the revolution of the 18th Brumaire. Napoleon heaped honors upon him and loaded him with employment. He proved a true and a devoted friend; few have thus requited him.

A candidate to the conservative senate, a counsellor of state, a president of section, a minister of state, chief attorney-general to the supreme imperial court, secretary of the imperial family's civil establishment, chief of a legion in the National Guard, a dignitary of the legion of honor, grand cross of the order of the golden eagle of Wurtemberg, member of the French Academy, he was despoiled, by the Restoration of all his honors, and calumniated; he could feel no attachment for it. In 1815, he was appointed to the chamber of representatives, and made heroic efforts to uphold Napoleon. Included in the proscription of 26th July 1815, he quitted France met with annoyance in Europe, crossed over to America, returned, or rather, was brought back to Europe. This soul of so superior a stamp, bereft of every other light but that of reason, was beset with sorrow; then it was that persecution relaxed in its attacks against so much merit, let me add such genuine virtue. The gates of his native land were re-opened to him, but it only proved a shelter to his remains. He died on reaching the sacred soil.



been cruelly calumniated. He was gifted with a frank, lively, generous, and impassioned heart, as irresistibly inclined to pleasure as to business, relaxing in a decent revel from the fatigue of thirty hours' writing or of harassing thoughts ; lively, full of wit, as vain as a peacock, but of that vanity which children are wont to display. His countenance beamed with joy whilst contemplating his decorations, his coats of arms, his numerous costumes ; he acted the count, no doubt ; but how many services had he rendered in return, how many tears dried up, how many bold struggles attempted against the will of his Emperor, of him who was the fanatic object of his attachment, in whom he delighted far more than the fair sex !

Blinded by the wonderful deeds of the great man, he believed in his infallibility ; every act directed against Napoleon was a sacrilege in his sight ; and, at the Emperor's voice, he gathered fresh strength, recommenced with ease a painful task, encouraged by the hope of pleasing, and rewarded by the mere expression, ' I am satisfied.' He grew angry at our lukewarmness, though

Arrived in Paris on the 9th of March, at eight o'clock at night, he expired at one in the morning of the 10th of March 1819. The hatred which had pursued him in life was transferred to his ashes. Enlightened in his best moments by a supernatural brightness, he was enabled to recognize his family and friends, and to forgive his persecutors. Heaven has great treasures of indulgence in store for those who close their days in this manner.



we were burning with zeal. Setting this fault, if it be one, aside, methinks I still behold him stately, gallant, merry, a delightful narrator, a profound diplomatist, a first rate financier, a skilful administrator, a splendid orator, a man of exquisite taste, a literary character of the highest order, a good father, a better friend, a kind hearted though wayward creature ; but I will not disguise his angry moments, his stormy temper, his passionate threats. He has been falsely charged with being a speculator ; as he exceeded all others in liberality, he was perhaps too willing to accept of presents which he returned a hundred fold ; he gave away so bountifully, that he felt himself entitled to some compensation. I recollect, in reference to this subject that, in 1814, after the period of his downfall, I offered him an Egyptian obelisk four feet in height, which I had purchased in Italy and which was on its way by sea. He accepted the present with delight, and repeatedly reminded me of it. The events of 1815 occurred, and I left Paris. His own correspondence and that of Madame A..... R....., our common friend, attest the perseverance, the anxiety with which, in the midst of such laborious duties, he kept in view the remittance of this curiosity which, being transferred from one vessel to another, and from hand to hand, was lost to us both.... Though we had, for the second time, been overwhelmed after the battle of Waterloo, he never ceased to



apply in his letters for his promised obelisk. This assuredly evinced no spirit of cupidity ; the article was in itself of no value ; but it was an object of art. I had offered, and he insisted upon receiving it. Well, then, it is upon such grounds as these that wretches who owed him a debt of gratitude for services rendered, have represented him as plundering and speculating right and left ; for the rest, the net amount of property, which remained at his death, abundantly proves that he never treasured up any thing.

It will not be denied that Napoleon was well skilled in the knowledge of men ; he distinguished Count Regnauld from the crowd, and set the highest value and reliance upon him. The following expressions of Bonaparte were related to me by the second Consul :—

“ If I confided to you the management of public affairs, with Regnauld to assist in carrying your decisions into effect, I should fearlessly go to the furthest extremity of the world, especially could I have Duroc, Berthier, Savary, and Marmont for my companions.”

Napoleon, as I have said, employed Count Regnauld upon every species of business, whether relating to the interior or to the external affairs,—both indiscriminately. He had appointed him attorney-general of the imperial family's civil establishment, a great officer of the legion of honour ; nothing was wanting to him ; he was a



member of the French Academy, and his talents entitled him to a distinction which was envied by men of no pretensions. A royalist in 1789, whilst a member of the states-general; persecuted by the Jacobins; clear of the excesses of the revolution, and a victim to them, he replied, in 1813, by a respectful refusal, to the offers made to him by order of Louis XVIII. He never boasted of this circumstance. The Emperor was informed of it by the minister of police, the Duke of Rovigo, and, when he reverted to the subject, Regnauld answered:—

“Why, Sire, in my place, you would have done the same. Where is the merit in being true to our mistress, when we are enraptured with her?”

The Emperor, highly delighted, grasped and pressed his hand.

“Well, then, Count Regnauld, it behoves me to requite you; you may rely upon me.”

The arch-chancellor entered soon after this pleasing scene. The Emperor, who was still under the emotion of it, related it to him in all its details, and the same evening, the Prince repeated it in his box at the Opera. Messieurs Bonnet and de Fesquet\* heard him as well as I

\* M. de Fesquet, ex-counsellor of the cours des aides of Montpellier, an old friend of Cambacérès, was one of the group who



did. The favour enjoyed by Count Regnauld was notorious ; it threw into despair, and was specially irksome to, the Duke of Bassano, the Duke of Rovigo, Messieurs de Fermont, Fouché, Thibeaudeau and others ; he laughed at it, was more considerate in his demeanour towards them, but flung at them the most biting epigrams.

The Bourbons received, in 1814, thousands of accusations against Count Regnauld. It was a masterly stroke on his part to preside at the French Academy on the day of M. Campenron's reception ; he availed himself of the occurrence to justify his conduct, and effected it with so much skill, brilliancy and success, that public opinion again rallied round him. This proved to him a signal triumph ; it was never forgiven him. He was proscribed in 1815, relentlessly persecuted, driven out of Europe. At length, he returned, fully justified from every accusation ; but he did so to yield up his life. Having reached Paris at night, we were called upon the next morning to pay the last duties to his remains. We were inconsolable at his

constantly accompanied the Prince Arch-chancellor in his visits to the Opera, the Variétés, the Passage des Panoramas, and the Palais-Royal. He was a gentleman of great wit, extremely obliging and serviceable. His son-in-law, M. Bonnet, had the misfortune to be enticed into voting for the death of Louis XVI ; he was afterwards director of the Opera. His wife has been held up as a model of grace, beauty and French wit.



untimely end, for he still numbered many friends. The French Academy, shunning a proscribed member, sent not the customary deputation to the funeral procession. The timidity of the officers of that body sheltered itself beneath an unlawful ordinance.

Having in the *Courrier Français*,\* to render an account of this mournful ceremony, I asserted, on the contrary, and I acknowledge my having done so through a mischievous motive, that magnanimous and grateful towards a colleague who had, in the days of his power, procured imperial gifts for the academicians, the French Academy had sent a deputation, and I praised them for this act of courage.

On the following day, a letter corrected my error, and Europe was informed that, if some individuals of the party did not make their appearance, through shame, at the house of the deceased, in church, or at the burial ground, in a black dress, and consequently mixed up with, or lost as it were in the mourning crowd, one member only, yes, only one member of the company, M. de Jouy, had had the fearless and proud courage of putting on the grand costume of the Institute,

\* This is the only article I ever had inserted in that journal, to which I was not personally the bearer of it. M. de J..... procured its admission. The prudence and moderation of the *Courrier*, and its sound literary opinions, have always procured for it a commanding influence over its readers.



dark green, lined with light green, and had bestowed a tribute of friendship and of just praise upon the remains of the illustrious departed. It is possible that many academicians may, at the present day, complain of the solitude in which I allow the hermit of the Chaussée d'Antin to languish ; but why were they silent in 1819 ? I shall ever affirm, for my part, that the academician I have named, and whose whole conduct has been consistent in acts of this nature, was the only one whom we saw dressed in his costume of office.\*

Consistently with our natural propensity to deviate from the beaten track, I have here enacted the part of those who, with a bandage over their eyes, descend, in a straight line, the green plat of Versailles ; they wander here and there, and never reach the end of their walk. But as it is my wish to arrive at the goal, I resume the narrative I had commenced at the beginning of this chapter.

I was, then, in the ex-chancellor's garden, and

\* M. de Jouy has never shrunk from an act of civil courage ; his life is replete with traits which redound to his honor. The ungrateful youth whose power he was the means of raising in the scale of society, were insensible to his success and his merits ; a day will come when justice will be done to him. This opinion, grounded upon a close study of his works, will attest my impartiality ; the wrongs I have to complain of, at the hands of his party, have never led me to speak any other language.



Count Regnault began relating to me one of the numerous anecdotes of his life ; he pursued, as follows, the digression which had raised a smile in my countenance.

“ I resided in my handsome hotel of the Rue de Provence ; and was wandering in that elysium, which I no longer enter but with regret, so painful are the recollections which now crowd around and beset me. On a sudden, I heard a noise at the outer door, for my Cerberus was not sparing of the harsh watch-word *no admission* ! He addressed, on this occasion, a female whose features escaped my observation ; but the harmony of flowers, of stuffs, of the shawl, of the shape of her garment, denote youth, freshness, a slender figure ; it is assuredly impossible that a dress of such taste should cover ill-favoured features. I feel inclined to stop the jaws of this boor, more snappish than Cerberus himself, who was loath to detain Eurydice from her spouse ; I hastened to the animated group :

“ What is it ?” I inquired.

“ ‘ Why, I am affirming to this lady that *Monseigneur* is absent, and she will not take my word for it.’

“ The scoundrel fixed his eyes upon me at this moment with all the boldness of a lying keeper.

“ Well, you have done your duty ; but, in the Count’s absence, I, who represent him, shall



enter into conversation with Madame, if she will honour me with her confidence.

“ On hearing these words, she turns round, and looks at me. . . . What a face ! what features ! what symmetry ! she is perfection itself ; I fell deeply in love with her ; she follows me to the garden ; the weather was beautiful and warm ; the flowers emitted a delicious perfume ; the atmosphere around us had a ravishing sweetness. I led to a green bower the fair incognita, whose voice is as yet unknown to me ; I offer her a seat which she accepts ; I occupy mine in such a manner as rather to appear on my knees before a new divinity than seated near one of our prettiest women.

“ The conversation opened ; I desire to know how I can be of service to you, Madam ?

“ The lady now names herself ; she is the Countess de Wontorden, an Austrian, as she pretends ; but an accent she would in vain disguise, strikes my practised ear, and reveals the deception. I have not to deal with a haughty German, but with a delicate cunning English woman who no doubt affects simplicity as she will presently assume the garb of virtue. She was assuredly a novice on the political stage. Thus forewarned, I was on my guard against every danger, except that of fine eyes and of the seduction which reluctantly attracts us to this amiable, open-hearted, but perfidious sex.



“ It is now my turn to be questioned as to who I am.

“ The Count’s intimate friend.”

“ ‘ What ! you possess all his confidence ?’ ”

“ He has not a thought with which I am not intrusted.

“ A pause ensued ; but as I also remained silent :

“ ‘ I bless my happy star which has led me to the presence of a gentleman . . . .’ ”

“ She stops and hesitates, when I take up the subject :

“ Well, Madam !”

“ ‘ Whose manners encourage me in manifesting sincerity towards him.’ ”

“ Ah snake, thought I, begotten of Eve’s serpent, thy sincerity will prove to be a clever but gross imposture which then will fashion into a falsehood for the greater glory of God.

“ I bowed.

“ ‘ And you inhabit this hotel in the capacity of . . . .’ ”

“ Of a relative, in the nearest degree, and of private secretary.”

“ ‘ Ah ! His Excellency’s brother ?’ ”

“ No, Madam.”

“ ‘ His cousin-german ?’ ”

“ A second bow of assent on my part.

“ ‘ I am brought to France, Sir, by parties of the highest interest ; I desire to do good,



to render a service to the prisoners of Verdun.\* I am wealthy, and commissioned to act on the part of those who are wealthier still ; they desire to rescue at all cost their relatives who languish in captivity, and would not hesitate as to the price that might be demanded in token of acknowledgment.'

"Madam," I coldly replied, 'this no longer concerns me ; and, from the moment you have held up gold to my view, I am bound to be silent.'

"Hereupon, she becomes lavish of assurances ; she excuses herself through her ignorance of the language ; she converses on general subjects, rambles from one to another, and thrusts forward an abundance of words of double meaning. Count Regnauld can pretend to greater elevation than his present rank ; I should myself become a high personage . . . . I pretend to give way ; and renew offers of service, which are accepted. I solicit permission to pay my respects ; it is granted ; I take down the address ; the lady rises and departs, leaving me dazzled with her beauty and

\* Napoleon, on the occasion of the rupture of the peace of Amiens, and in reprisals for the capture of French vessels by British corsairs, previously to the declaration of war, caused all the English to be arrested who were travelling in France and Italy, and sent them to reside as prisoners at Verdun. This measure, which appeared to me to be dictated by prudence and sound policy, was much censured. How could he, otherwise, have punished the bad faith evinced by his enemy ?



gracefulness, but wholly mistrustful of her intentions.

“ She is no sooner gone than I fly to the Tuileries, and relate all to Napoleon ; such was my custom, and by this sincerity much mischief has been prevented.

“ ‘ I would lay a wager,’ says the Emperor to me, ‘ that Rovigo is ignorant of the existence of this damsel ; utter not a word to him on the subject ; carry on the intrigue ; I leave you at full liberty to act ; but, beware not to be duped.’

“ Our acquaintance improves ; I repair to the Countess of Wontorden under my real name ; the only supposition is as to person ; I feign to be in love,—she gives me an indulgent but cold reception. I complain ; she smiles ; I grow angry ; she then says : ‘ What proof would you afford of your love ?’

“ Any proof you may require.”

“ ‘ Well, if you can, by means of your relations, let me know what are Napoleon’s real intentions with respect to Germany, whether he still meditates a descent upon England, and especially if I obtain a list of the names, and the address of those Englishmen, traitors to their country, who are in the service of your sovereign, if you add to it those of German and of French emigrants who are dispersed over the continent to enact the same part ; then, at so signal a



proof of attachment, I shall avow the partiality of my heart.'

" She had not made such advances without long matured preparations ; nevertheless, the subject was opened by degrees ; the adventuress fancied herself safe in her avowal, imagining that she held over my affections a despotic sway ; she had, on the contrary, just extinguished them by tearing away the veil ; I now only beheld a pretty intriguer whom it behoved me to unmask. I checked myself, feigned alarm, but did not give a negative answer.

" ' You have,' she continued, ' many more matters to listen to. Contrive to procure me an interview with your cousin ; I am entrusted with a special message for him.'

" I promised to comply with her wishes ; she was acquainted with Count Regnauld's handwriting, my notes were accordingly copied by one of my secretaries, a trustworthy fellow, full of wit, a poet, of gentle birth, and polished education, whom you will no doubt have met with in society : Lebrun des Charmettes.\* I wrote to her, on my

\* Born at Bordeaux in 1783, M. Lebrun des Charmettes was secretary to Count Regnauld, sub-prefect of St. Calais, and of I know not what other place. Literature, which he successfully cultivated, is indebted to him for an epic poem, *L'Orbanide*, the heroine of which is Joan of Arc ; it evinces great talent and poetic rapture. He has published the history of Joan of Arc in four volumes octavo with plates. It is the most complete of any,



return home, that with reference to the wish she signified to my cousin of having an interview with me, I had to express my regret at the impossibility of granting her request, having made it a rule never to hold intercourse with mysterious strangers. My delicacy, on the other hand, was a sure pledge to her of my secrecy ; nevertheless, I added, my cousin will listen to whatever you may be pleased to impart to him, and will repeat to me the conversation which I shall weigh with all the prudence called for by the occasion.

“ I could easily have put a counterpart of myself forward, but was unwilling to extend my confidence, and adhered to my first silence. I am thus become the bearer of my own note ; I perceive that it thwarts the stranger who yet resolves to speak out. Louis XVIII has set down Count Regnauld amongst the statesmen of the revolution with whom it would be most agreeable to him to come to terms. That Prince desires the happiness of France. France cannot be happy without him, for he alone can restore peace, commerce and plenty ; with him, agriculture, the fine arts, industry will revive ;

is the result of deep research, written in a good style and feeling, and full of merit. He has translated many English romances, as well as Lady Morgan's France. He was chief editor of the *Abeille* newspaper. His father perished on the revolutionary scaffold ; the son is a distinguished administrator, and numbers many friends, to whose regard he is justly entitled.



animosities within, discord without, will at once come to an end. He praises liberty on a large scale ; a paternal government, moderation, economy, two independent chambers, responsible ministers, the vote of taxes by the nation, the press free from all shackles, individual liberty guaranteed, the empire of the laws, the charter in short, such as it has been lately promulgated.

“ All this was reasonable, and even dazzling ; I acknowledge that I was unable to listen to the details of such a plan without feeling the deepest emotion ; I was forced to admit, notwithstanding my attachment for the Emperor, that the man who spoke thus was a fit model for monarchs. I was, therefore, so much affected that, altering my style of language and assuming a grave countenance, I replied :

“ When I speak to you, Madam, rest assured that you are listening to the sentiments that Count Regnauld himself would utter ; be pleased to convey them to M. le Comte de Lille. M. Regnauld would fain have it in his power to receive his commands without being guilty of a crime, without violating any promise, without breaking any oaths, without a betrayal of friendship. He would fulfil them with the most ardent zeal ; but he is bound by the ties of affection to the sovereign whom he serves, and will never separate himself from him. If Napoleon, in consequence of events which none can foresee, and which there is every reason to



believe of impossible occurrence, should himself release M. Regnauld from his engagements, he would then serve the family of the Bourbons by every means in his power. Until such a chance should come to pass, the Count must rest satisfied with anxiously praying for their happiness. His good wishes go no further, and would cease as soon as the members of that house should think themselves warranted in emerging from their present state of quiet, and again attempting to disturb the condition of Europe.

“ I know not what expression my countenance assumed on uttering these words, which, in short, conveyed a flash of light to her mind which had not hitherto struck her ; certain it is that she started, kindled into animation, and, falling back a step, said to me with deep anguish :

“ ‘ Oh ! you have shamefully deceived me ; you are Count Regnauld himself, and not his cousin.’

“ This was uttered with such inward conviction, that coloring up myself, and taken by surprise, sensible, besides, that no success could attend any attempt to maintain the deception, I began to smile.

“ It would ill become me to deny it ; but is this so guilty an act, and have I changed my heart for having taken another name ? assuredly not ; for you do not exercise sway over the heart of my relation but over mine.”



“ ‘ Nevertheless,’ she resumed, ‘ you deny me what I ask ; you sacrifice me to your God, or rather to your demon.’

“ Oh ! Madam ,be sparing of your reproaches ; let two verses of our celebrated fable writer be your rule of conduct. They have been the guide of my whole life :

“ *On ne peut trop louer trois sortes de personnes,  
Son Dieu, sa maîtresse, et son Roi.*”

“ The Countess was silent—she was dissatisfied—and I regretted it. Then it was, that by a quick inward reflection, I shuddered at perceiving how great was the ascendancy which I had allowed her to acquire over my heart. I gently chid this extreme waywardness, which subjected me to a worse reception at the very moment when I acquired greater importance in her sight.

“ ‘ Alas !’ she promptly replied, ‘ I then indulged the hope of bringing you round to my wish ; whereas, I now feel that there is no hope of success.’

“ Rejoice at this result, and renounce a game so beset with dangers ; you may be happy by dismissing diplomatic pursuits from your mind....

“ Eight days afterwards, a servant and one of my secretaries warned me that an attempt had been made to tamper with them. I was returning one night alone and on foot, two men



attacked me as I came out of the Rue de Hanovre ; they would have murdered me but for the approach of the patrol. On another occasion, whilst quitting the opera amongst the crowd, I was struck with a dagger which was stopped by my morocco pocket-book full of papers.

“ I was silent respecting these attempts at my life, in order not to disturb the peace of my family, but I requested the police to watch over my safety. I was immeasurably removed from a correct surmise on the subject, when the Duke of Rovigo called upon me one morning in breathless haste. I felt surprised at his presence.

“ ‘ Are you acquainted, Count, with a Countess Wontorden ?’

“ I occasionally see her.”

“ ‘ Would you feel much annoyed if I were to have her arrested ?’

“ Have you then a crow to pluck with each other ?”

“ ‘ The case is not mine ; but your own.’

“ For my part, I replied with a smile, I bear her no ill-will ; and, as for her, I do not think her my enemy.”

“ ‘ In this, you are mistaken ; you have lodged information of two murderous attempts upon your life. Five have been made ; another is preparing for to-morrow. It depends upon yourself that it should be the last ; the question is whether



you will persist in a blind confidence, or be pleased to follow my advice ?’

“ I was amazed with this language. Could my dear, my beautiful Countess whom I had converted to my opinion, attempt to betray me, and even deprive me of my life? My astonishment excited the Duke’s risible faculties to my very great annoyance ; he then took up various papers, the appearance of which revealed them to be what are called police reports. He read four of them in the following order :

“ ‘ No. 1.—In the Rue des....Hotel de.... resides for the last two months and a half Countess Albertine de Wontorden, a lady of quality in the circle of upper Austria. She came to Paris to enjoy the pleasures of the capital and consult medical men ; however, she has not seen any ; she has much intercourse with Count Regnauld de Saint-Jean d’Angely, and transmits business as they call it ; she is a suitor, money in hand, and obtains... ’

“ I started up, waxed warm, and, with a volley of oaths told the minister of police that his spy was an impostor, a calumniator, who alone deserved punishment, and not the Countess, who was innocent of such guilty manœuvres, since she never had spoken to me, (this was the truth,) of any French intriguers. The Duke allowed my rage its free scope, and thus continued :



“ ‘ And obtains favors which she turns to good account ; but this is not all ; this pretended German Countess is an English woman by birth, the daughter of a minister of the name of P.... She came to the continent and to France with a mission to watch public functionaries, and win them over to the cause of the Bourbons ; this has been discovered by means of an intercepted correspondence in cyphers.’

“ ‘ No. 2.—Count Regnauld’s life is not safe. Last night, in the Rue de Hanovre, an Italian and an Englishman, in the pay of the said Wontordon, have attempted to murder him. A patrol disconcerted the wretches. The Italian went to bed, the Englishman repaired to his mistress, where he got intoxicated ; and this creature, who is in the pay of the police, exerted herself to make him disclose what he knew ; he related the miscarried assault. Being asked why this adventuress sought the life of H. E. Monseigneur Regnauld, he replied that he was ignorant of it.’

“ ‘ No. 3.—H. E. Monseigneur the Count Regnauld was entering the court-yard of the Prince Arch-Chancellor on Tuesday last, an air-gun was fired from the doorway into his carriage. The ball passed through, and, as the windows were down, no report was heard. This attempt was made by Marco the Italian, a native of Venice ; the Englishman and two cut-throats were in his company, and formed a group. This account was



also derived from the Englishman Hill's communication to his mistress.'

“ ‘ No. 4.—An attempt has been made to tamper with the man servant who cleans the floors of Count Regnauld's apartments, and to induce him to throw a powder, to be given for the purpose, into water decanters and jars, from whence the said Count might draw the water which he daily drinks. Two persons came to make a similar declaration to the police, and have furnished a description of those who made the aforesaid proposals to them.'

“ ‘ No. 5.—Marco affirms that Count Regnauld is shielded by Satan ; for he attempted the other night to stab him with a glass dagger, as he was leaving the opera ; the murderous instrument broke against Count Regnauld's breast.'

“ ‘ No. 6.—Yesterday, at seven precisely, Count Regnauld went, according to custom, to visit Madame Augustine....Rue de la Michodière.... Marco followed, ascended the staircase after him, and, availing himself of the absence of mind of the Count, who had left the door open, he entered after him, concealed himself in a dark closet, and was preparing to take advantage of the opportunity, which in all appearance would prove favorable to his design, when the Count with his usual absence mechanically gave a double turn to the key belonging to the door of the cabinet, and shut in Marco, so as to prevent his coming out without



making a noise. Marco, foaming with rage, had to wait until the Count retired ; the young woman also left. Marco then began to work with his dagger, burst a couple of doors open, and came with imprecations to tell the Englishman, then in the company of his mistress, the misfortune which had just befallen him. This mistress, by name Emilie Lisbin, was so indignant at the perverseness of these monsters, that she instantly came to make her report.

“ Well Count,” said the minister of general police, “ think you that we are so indifferently informed ?”

“ In truth, Monsieur le Ministre, I will frankly own to your Excellency, how great was my surprise that such villains should be allowed to be at large.”

“ You would be quite right, if the closest watch were not set upon them ; they walk abroad, but do not stir a step which is not known. They shall be pounced upon the very moment I so order it. I was first anxious to see you. You are invited to breakfast to-morrow at the Countess’ house.

“ Yes.”

“ An active poison is spoken of, which is to be thrown into the cup of chocolate to be presented to you. Will you go and exchange cups with the lady ? The men in that case will not be arrested until the report is over ; in the contrary case, I



shall have all the wretches taken up within twenty minutes from this time."

"I own to you," said Count Regnault, "that I hesitated a moment as to what I should do; I do not boast of more courage than I really possess. I am a man for the cabinet, and not for action, and felt little inclined to expose myself to such palpable danger; for it was possible that the unfeeling Countess, in her apprehension of non-success, might dispatch me to the next world. Nevertheless, the fear of Savary's bantering jests, added to the moral courage we feel in the moment we cowardly civilians are called upon to display it, made me determine to run all risks of the adventure.

"The Duke, moreover, allayed my fears; every possible measure of prudence had been taken to save me from a wilful murder. I was fully resolved, besides, to feign illness, and to eat nothing but fresh eggs. I also felt anxious to unmask this worthless adventuress. I thanked the Duke, who returned to his functions; on my part,

Honteux comme un renard qu'une poule aurait pris,  
Baissant la queue, et portant bas l'oreille.

I went, by way of self-punishment, to entertain the Emperor with this novel occurrence. Oh! my friend, how could I be otherwise than devoted to



the excellent Prince? could you have seen his rage, his horror, his indignation, during the recital made to him ; he was like a roaring lion. He forbade my repairing to the breakfast, caused the house to be instantly surrounded, and the Englishman and his nefarious accomplices to be arrested. He bounded with rage. I had great difficulty in pacifying him, and inducing him to alter his mind ; and he made me promise, that after my visit to this second Circé, I should come in person to give him an account of what had taken place.

“ I could but feebly convey to you his affectionate emotion. He was no longer the mighty monarch indifferent to private details, but an ardent friend inwardly suffering at the thought of the danger about to be incurred by his second self. Had I indeed ten lives, I would sacrifice them all for his sake.

“ My sleep was restless, and disturbed by frightful dreams. I could not resist settling various affairs on the following morning. My secret was repeatedly on the point of escaping my lips. I left home, however, without revealing it. The Countess received me with her usual warmth ; she had brought several strangers together ; all were unknown to me. Along the stair case, in the ante-room, the restaurateurs, and ice shops' assistants were employed in bringing dishes and ices. There were also many servants of the persons invited, besides other attendants. Every thing exhibited indications of the mysterious stamp of the police, and thus



satisfied me that I had not been exposed alone to the mercy of my enemies.

“ I was sad, in spite of my endeavours to appear cheerful ; the Countess chid me for it. I spoke of the bad night I had passed ; breakfast was announced. I held the place of honor near the lady of the house ; she urged me to eat : I had no appetite, for anxiety had in fact deprived me of all inclination to partake of any thing. I eat two soft eggs ; of dainties I selected at hazard, and a little fruit ; I drank nothing. At last, the announced chocolate makes its appearance ; we were brought together to decide upon its merits ; a cup is placed before each guest, mine is filled before every other : I raised no objection, but exclaimed on a sudden :—

“ Oh Madam, can I allow myself to be served before you ? no, no, I am too anxious an assertor of French gallantry, not to insist upon your taking what you so kindly intended for myself.

“ I had hastened, ere I spoke, to place, by a rapid movement, my full cup before the Countess, and to take possession of the empty one which had been reserved for her.

“ How shall I express the indescribable look she cast upon me whilst this exchange was going on ? shall I say that it unsettled my heart, or rather that it threw a new light upon it ? A crowd of ideas rushed upon my mind : every thing in the house became suspicious in my sight ; my eyes sparkled with fire, my ears tingled with a sharp



murmur, I hardly heard what was said. I assuredly saw nothing that was passing before me.

“ The lady, who was no less agitated, turned pale and red by turns, complained of my excessive politeness, and urged me to take back my cup. I opposed it. She made a sign to the servant who was pouring out the chocolate ; he left off serving round the table, came to me, poured out the wholesome and frothy mixture, whilst his mistress fixed her eye upon me ; oh ! this was no longer a doubtful look.

“ I am too ill, I said ; it would be quite out of my power to drink this chocolate.”

“ ‘ It has been prepared expressly for you,’ she replied with a reproachful tone.

“ I know it, Madam ; I had been before hand apprized of it.”

“ ‘ So I perceive ; and it only remains for me to prove to you how much you have been deceived. Pusillanimous men, who are frightened at a mere jest !’

“ A sardonic look of contempt overspread her lips. All this had been spoken in so subdued a tone as not to be overheard.

“ ‘ Look,’ she continued in the same tone, ‘ and blush at your cowardice !’

“ She then takes the cup which I considered to be the poisoned one, brings it to her mouth, closes her eyes, and drinks the contents to the very last drop.



“ ‘ Well,’ she said, ‘ are you not ashamed, and will you not pledge me in return ?’

“ I hesitated : my confusion was at its height ; nevertheless, her matchless glance was still present to my mind. I laid hold of the cup, the Countess brightened up ; I laid it down, she turned pale ; her whole frame was agitated with a convulsive movement . . . . I could no longer doubt, and suddenly rising from my seat, I said to this guilty woman :

“ You are ill, I perceive : in the name of Heaven, Madam, retire to your apartment. Let a doctor be sent for.”

“ ‘ No,’ she replied, ‘ I am quite well, just as I could wish to be.’

“ At this moment, one of the police agents who was present, waiting for a sign from me, laid hold of my cup still full of chocolate, as if to remove it from me. The Countess uttered, at this sight, not a cry, but a frightful yell. She rose, attempted to seize the porcelain ; I interposed, she fell fainting into her arm-chair. This accident threw the guests into confusion ; I assumed an authoritative tone, and invited them to withdraw, in order to leave the people of the house at liberty to attend upon their mistress, who was labouring, I said, under a violent nervous attack. All hastened to take my advice.

“ The apartment was filled, in a moment, with a swarm of public functionaries and police officers,



each coming to draw up warrants or offer assistance. At the very commencement of breakfast, the police had arrested Marco, the Italian, and the Englishman, Hill. Both cups had been prepared beforehand ; for it had been foreseen that I should act the courteous man ; it was hoped, in that case that, if I handed my cup to the adventuress, I should have no suspicion of her own. She was to invent a pretext for not drinking ; so that I was in every event doomed to perish. I had defeated this plan ; and borne away by her hatred, by her thirst for revenge, she hesitated not to repeat the act of Corneille's Cleopatra, in hopes that when I saw her swallow the portion intended for me, I would have no hesitation in swallowing her own. It needed greater command over herself to succeed in her object : for her intentions had too visibly manifested themselves in her physiognomy. For the rest, you will ask why so much bitterness against me ? Hear, then, my candid answer, though silent I must be on that point, which I never can clear up—I must acknowledge I had wrongs to atone for as regarded her.

“ The medical man I had sent for, and who had been kept in constant attendance near the spot where this tragical scene was enacting, in order to be prepared in any event, arrived whilst the guests were leaving the house. They were closely followed by spies and several were arrested. They



had come with evil designs against my person, but, on seeing the turn matters had taken, abstained from any attempt. Various punishments were meted out to them.

“ Removed to her bed-room, the Countess had fallen from one convulsion into another. This was imagined to be the effect of the poison ; but she dispelled the impression, for, having asked to speak with me, she said in presence of the doctor, the judge, and the police commissary :—

“ ‘ The efforts that will be made to save my life are all in vain. The poison which I have taken baffles the attempts of the faculty to remove it ; it will act imperceptibly, without leaving any traces ; and unless its effects be accelerated, I shall live till the eightieth or hundredth day from the present time. You have been fortunate,’ said she, to me with composure. ‘ We have each our wrongs. I am an Englishwoman, I hate France ; I hoped to serve it an ill turn. As for you . . . .’

“ She darted at me a look of so much expression that I bent down my head. I could not even remain any longer near her ; my poor heart was breaking. I assure you, that if I had really believed the cup to contain poison ere she drank it off, I was completely deceived by her determination to do so, and only resumed my former mistrust as my eye caught her significant countenance, whilst I hesitated what to do with my own cup.



What became of her ? I asked the Count.

“ I opposed her being arrested. The Emperor, in the most obliging manner, granted my request. She was removed to a private mad-house ; the most skilful attentions were lavished upon her. Our first rate doctors vied with each other in endeavours to counteract the effect of the poison, but all in vain ; she expired eighty-nine days afterwards. Ask me no question respecting her last moments ; they were frightful, and plunged me into despair. Be assured, my friend, that the best thing we can do, when young, is to obtain the affection of women, without showing it in return ; and when of riper years, to follow the Marquis de Carraccioli's example.”

A tragic tale was thus cheerfully closed with a witty saying ; it had, however, fixed itself upon my mind, and created a painful impression. When we returned to the gardens, the Prince perceived the gloom upon my countenance. He was easily annoyed. He knew that I saw much society ; I was related to many persons about the court, to the Duke Abbé de Montesquieu amongst others, and he fancied that such exalted personages condescended perhaps to notice a bashful young man when lost in a crowd ; such was not the case ; I was alike unknown and indifferent to them.

Convinced, therefore, that under the new *ré-gime*, and during the triumph of my peers, I was welcomed with that obliging kindness I had always



met with from the men of the Empire, the Prince noticed me in the midst of his circle ; for, in 1814, he had still kept up a species of court. After 1815, on the contrary, our numbers were much reduced when he was allowed to return ; the Prince, then, drew me aside, and said to me :

“ ‘ What have you heard, Leon, what has come to your knowledge ? is there some illegal measure in contemplation ? Ca—— threw out some hint of it yesterday in this place, and he is generally well informed.’

I shook my head.

“ ‘ What ails you ? open your mind ; I believe in your attachment.’

“ Monseigneur would be wrong to doubt it ; but I advise you, and I do so with great reluctance, to beware of Ca——, and by degrees to shake him off altogether. No later than yesterday, I was dining with my relative and friend, Baron de Puymaurin, a member of the chamber of deputies ;\* Ca—— had paid him a visit that very

\* Jean Casimir Pierre de Marcassus, Baron de Puymaurin, Commander of the Legion of Honour, perpetual member, from 1800 to 1830, of the Chamber of Deputies, Ex-Director of the medal branch of the Mint, was born at Toulouse, of a family of distinction, and, which is quite as good, revered for the eminent services it had rendered his country. On the 5th December 1767, his father was principal Syndic of the province of Languedoc, an office of the highest importance, which was only conferred upon men of honor, merit and virtue : times have greatly altered. A



morning ; and gave me the following account of his visit :

“ ‘ Fouché was still at the head of the police when, having called to pay him a visit, he suddenly said, in the language of friendship : ‘ Be very sparing of words whenever Ca—— may come to prowl about you.’ Reflecting upon these words, and determined to watch the movements of the dissembler, I saw him constantly gliding into the chamber of deputies, at one time into the library, at another into the hall of conferences, without any apparent object, and he remained fixed to the spot. I felt annoyed at it. Wearied at seeing him wandering about each group of deputies, I at last used him roughly on one occasion, told him that

model of ancient fidelity, a skilful chemist, a theorist and a practical man, his cutting language hits home. His comparison of calumny is well remembered : *it resembles coal which is sure to blacken if it does not burn*. He had introduced into France, as early as 1787, the art of engraving upon glass by means of fluoric acid. He perfected, in 1812, the art of extracting indigo from wood, so as to challenge comparison with the best indigo of Bengal or Guatimala. A sincere, trusty, and warm friend, a learned man of the first order, a distinguished literary character, he is not known to have a single enemy ; he has belied the old proverb, for he has even been a prophet in his own country. He enjoys public consideration ; but he has not been playing a comedy during the fifteen years. His son who resigned, in 1830, his post of Director of the medal branch of the Mint, which our Kings had bestowed upon him, nobly treads in his father's footsteps.



he had no business there, that his constant attendance gave rise to suspicions, and that he would do well to check the frequency of his visits. So saying, in the hearing of a dozen people, I left him, proceeded to the tribune, and thought no more of the man. He was at my house before seven the next morning ; I thought he came to propose a walk to the Bois de Boulogne, and the old Tolousan blood was already boiling in my veins ; but nothing was farther from his mind ! My man came to shed tears, to sigh, to swear by his hope of heaven, that he had never, directly or indirectly, belonged to the police ; that he was greatly calumniated by such a charge, adding, that if he knew the original author of it, he would pluck out his heart.

“ ‘ I must then make him known to you,’ replied Baron de Puymaurin, ‘ he is neither more nor less than the Duke of Otranto ; he it was who affirmed to me that you belonged to his establishment ; I will assert it to his face. It is for you now to consider what you have to do.’

“ Annihilated by this blow, Ca—— withdrew, pocketing the affront, and relieved me of his infectious presence ; for he is as offensive as a dead rat. Ever since this explanation, I had long ceased to see him either at the chamber of deputies or at my own house. One evening, however, he reappeared, and said to me in a piteous tone of voice :

“ ‘ What think you, my friend, of such base ingratitude ; my best services have, for the last



fifteen years, been devoted to the government. I hold certificates from Regnier, from Fouché, from Savary, who have all attested my zeal and attachment. I have continued making reports ever since the first of April, and may still be found of the greatest use from my intercourse with the men of Bonaparte. Well, then! instead of rewarding me, of gladly availing themselves of the services of a man of birth (this was a falsehood) they are on the point of dismissing me. They should at least give me, by way of compensation on my retirement, a situation of inspector of gaming houses. You are serviceable, humane, in short—my friend!

“Moi, votre ami! rayez cela de vos papiers.”

“I exclaimed.

“‘You are very witty; the quotation from the *Misanthrope* is delightful. But still do take my papers in hand, a note of my *campaigns* (such was his expression); see d’Andre, see the chancellor, (M. d’Aubray), the minister of the interior (the Abbé, since de Montesquiou), and exert yourself to have me retained in the service, or creditably transferred to the lease of the gaming houses of Paris.’

“How is this? said I to him; do you recollect, last year, your virtuous indignation on



the occasion of my apostrophizing you in the hall of conferences ?

“ ‘ What could I do ? you stormed ; and such truths are only acknowledged in the last extremity. Come, then, let me rely upon your support, and I am sure of my place.’ ”

“ Such, Monseigneur, I added, is yesterday’s narration, word for word, as I received it from a man who is incapable of calumniating another, and whose assertions possess, in my mind, all the force of truth.

“ I saw the Prince bite his lip.

“ ‘ Oh ! the wretch !’ he exclaimed. ‘ No later than yesterday, he will have it in his power to pick up a large stock from what he heard at my house ; but he shall never more be admitted.’ ”

“ Your Serene Highness will do well to exclude him.”

“ ‘ Yes ; but you are sad. What have you heard from M. de Puymaurin, the Abbé de Montesquiou, or the Duke de Duras ?’ ”

“ Nothing : the first, because he knows nothing of what concerns you ; the other two, because I am never in their company ; the last is even ignorant of my name ; the second is, no doubt, acquainted with me, but, judging from his cold reception, I perceive he does not deem me worthy of his confidence.

“ ‘ I have, therefore, nothing to apprehend ?’ ”



“ Why, Monseigneur, perceive you not the brightness of the Restoration ? We may all sing in chorus with Ali of *the Beauty and the Beast*, slightly altering Marmontel’s verses :

“ Ces *Bourbons* dont on nous fait peur  
Sont les meilleurs gens du monde.”

“ ‘ Very true ; they put no bounds to their clemency ; I could accordingly wish every one remained quiet ; whereas all, on the contrary, are in motion, restless, caballing ! Do you belong to any association ?’

“ No more than to that of free-masonry, or of the white penitents. The part of a conspirator is only adapted to dupes or ambitious men. I will not be the one ; thank heaven, I am not the other. I am attached to the Emperor. My blood, my life, my all—is at his disposal ; but I will not evince my attachment to him by contributing to disturb the repose of France. I believe that his return is possible ; should it take place,—should he come back as conqueror, I shall resume my costume ; until then, I shall attend the existing representation as a mere spectator.”

“ ‘ You are not in quest of employment ?’

“ I have offered myself to the new government, as every other functionary has done, but from a distance, by letters, and without protection. I was forgotten on my first arrival in Paris ; I



went in August to visit the Abbé de Montesquiou, and recalled to his mind our family connection ; he spoke to me of my father, his college friend, of their boxing matches, of their intimacy ; he then referred me to M. B——, who held to me this remarkable language :

“ ‘ Sir, you are at the door of a theatre ; you have a ticket, and cannot obtain admittance : it is only by means of an addition to the price that you can enter before others.’ ”

“ ‘ Did he tell you so ?’ exclaimed the Prince. ”

“ ‘ Yes, Monseigneur, without the slightest hesitation, and in the presence of my wife, who can bear witness to it. I was unwilling to give the additional price ; and, with my mind full of Napoleon, and convinced of his return, I repeated to M. B—— the celebrated expression of the Abbé de Bernis to the Bishop of Mirepoix : ‘ *Monseigneur, I shall wait !*’\* save and except that I did not give

\* The Abbé de Bernis, a gentleman of excellent family though a poor man, at one time the lover of Madame Henriette de France, daughter of Louis XV, and afterwards of Madame de Pompadour. He became Archbishop of Alby, minister for foreign affairs, Cardinal, Ambassador to the Holy See ; he was an academician, a poet, a man of the world ; and ended by becoming a pious and charitable man. He started from Cythera on his way to Heaven, where his virtues have no doubt procured him admission. He had the mortification to witness the revolution, his death having only occurred in 1796. When young, he was a suitor for a benefice at the hands of the active Boyer, Bishop of Mirepoix ; this



the title of Monseigneur to my grasping hypocrite.

“ ‘ To reveal himself in such a manner !’

“ It is unaccountable, I acknowledge ; but I heard him utter the words ; my wife, I repeat it, as distinctly heard him ; this is the occasion for saying with Boileau :

Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable ;

which, nevertheless, does not alter the fact.”

“ ‘ Are you, then, persuaded that Napoleon will return ?’

“ It cannot be otherwise.”

“ ‘ I . . . . I fear so.’

“ Your Serene Highness fears it ?”

“ ‘ Yes, Sir, he will hurl us both into fresh convulsions ; Europe is still in arms. The sovereigns have testified their hatred of him ; they are aware that, admonished by their conduct towards him, he would not forgive them, if he again acquire the

worthy prelate, feeling little delighted at the ruins and gallantries of the Abbé de Bernis, replied : *A benefice for you ? you shall never have one so long as I am a minister.—I shall wait, Monseigneur.* This happy expression proved a prelude to the fortune of the man thus out of favour. M. Boyer used to sign himself *l'Anc* de Mirepoix, (an abbreviation for *l'Ancien*) ; and Voltaire pretended to read, by way of erratum, *L'âne de Mirepoix* ; this was jocose. Priests were murdered at a later period, which was worse ; but from raillery to crime the step is easy ; impiety leads to every crime.



ascendancy ; and, in the first hostile demonstration on his part, they will all march in concert against him ; he will find France unprovided with soldiers, or ammunition . . . . ; he has written to me.'

" Ah ! how happy you must be !"

" ' I can shew you his letter ; you will see what are his sentiments.'

" I rather think I shall only see what he has written to you.

" The Prince took me into his study, where I read the following letter, which I hastily copied off in pencil :—

" ' Prince,

" ' I am in good health ; I hope my letter may also find you in the enjoyment of it. I am informed you lead a quiet life ; are you contented ? I imagined they would employ you . . . . they are fortunate in having found men superior to you . . . . I grow visibly stouter, though I am never at rest ; this is a small island, a handful of earth, or rather, a mass of rock.

" ' What is there going on in Paris ? Is novelty still new ? They say the court make but little show. The counties are poor ; they will grow richer . . . . are you freed from *our friends* ? Their visit costs dear ; it is fortunately well known where one may take back what they carry away ; there is no difficulty in treading over a beaten road . . . . I see but little of my family ; the Empress mother



is admirable in her endearments. Poor Pauline would afford me consolation, if I stood in need of it; her's is a heroic attachment.... So much harm is said of me, that my name is not likely to be so soon forgotten.... Bestow some thought upon your *Emperor*, or your colleague, as you please; he does not forget you.... What are my gallant soldiers doing? how are they treated? on what footing are they at the Château? are they rewarded for having deserted me? I forgive them. They stood in need of trying a Bourbon, in order the better to appreciate their Bonaparte.

“ ‘ Whereupon, Sir, my cousin, may God have you in his holy keeping.

“ ‘ Your affectionate friend,

“ ‘ (*Signed*)      Napoleon.’

Without a date. I kissed that sacred handwriting, nor can I resist doing so as often as the Emperor's signature comes within my reach; let this be forgiven me. As a monarch, he is my first love; my second love is for H. M. Louis XVIII. I only reveal my sentiments when their object is already in the grave—in this I prove a bad courtier; accordingly I am not of that *régime*.

The Prince returned, and said jokingly:

“ ‘ I smell a copied letter.’

“ ‘ Yes, Monseigneur, but copied in pencil, and



with so many abbreviations that my heart alone can decipher it ; my eyes would fail in the attempt.

“ You see in it the proof of his persevering to remain where he is.”

“ Yes, until the day when, surfeited with novelty, the nation will desire to return to the old system.”

“ This will not be so soon.”

“ Monseigneur, we are treading the beaten track, only to tread it over, again.”

“ Yes, this is the knot, I have understood it as you do ; what a man ! he is wealthy, enjoys every consideration, is no longer young. In his place.....”

I was silent ; I might have replied by the old adage ; I abstained on this occasion. The Prince continued :—

“ Attend to what I am going to say : you visit Count Regnauld and Carnot : well ! assure them that, contented with my position, I have no desire to change it ; I should refuse all co-operation in acts which might afford the highest promise of success. I will neither take part in them personally nor by procuring aid. Repeat it, proclaim it on the house-tops. There are men devoid of all reserve or discretion. A certain Colonel S....., came to propose that I should place myself at the head of a plot, of which he is the main-spring. Nothing was wanting except a sum of a thousand crowns : I shewed him the door.



General E....., General V....., and other madmen of the same stamp, have made me like proposals. I am neither a disinterested nor a factious man ; I complain of nobody ; why then should I give others more concern for me than I take for myself?"

The Prince was roused : I took good care that not a gesture, a look, a motion of my lips, should interrupt him. On such occasions, I had always something to learn.

" Last week," he continued, " the Viscountess de F..... was announced to me, a madwoman I had long lost sight of ; I was courteous to her, and she thus addressed me :—

" ' My dear M. Cambacérès, you have held too conspicuous a rank for the last twenty-five years, and that amongst the enemies of our sainted family, not readily to understand the necessity of affording to the Bourbons, and to those who worship them, a pledge of your return to better sentiments.....'

" Madam....."

" ' Sir, I am your friend ; I grieve at the position in which you stand, and dream of extricating you from it ; I think I have discovered the thread that will lead you out of the labyrinth. It has occurred to me that a signal act of munificence, on your part, would be productive of an effect highly advantageous to you, and such as you would feel beholden to me for having pointed out. Hun-



dreds of persons have been crushed by the Revolution ; and, as you were amongst the revolutionists, you must take your share of blame for their misfortunes. Now, then, select twenty-five widows of quality, all of them without children ; they are the most entitled to protection ; establish them in a house which I undertake to have erected into a royal chapter ; endow each of them with an income of six thousand francs ; place a superior at their head, with an income of twenty thousand francs ; and you will not forget,' she added with a prim, affected, manner, ' the eternal old woman.' She then continued, assuming with the aid of her fan a decayed gracefulness, ' On your nominating for the first time this superior who has inspired you with the happy idea of the foundation. Such an act of munificence will delight the clergy, enchant the Duchess of Angoulême, her august husband, our charming Monsieur ; the first families in the kingdom will manifest their gratitude to you ; and I think I may affirm that, this matter once settled, you will be invited to the morning receptions at the Château, and to the Sunday receptions after mass.'

" I could not feel angry at the extravagant suggestion. How thankful I am to you, I replied, for having so correctly penetrated my sentiments ! I have thought of something of the kind . . . . "

" ' Oh ! you are a most amiable man, ever intent upon doing good.' "



“ The only difference is, that I design to be of service to decayed magistrates.

“ The disappointed lady rose from her seat like a fury, called me every bad name, and departed. I knew her to have said, at the evening parties of *bouillotte*, that my intention was to establish and richly endow a house of refuge for the conquerors of the Bastile, the murderers of September and the Jacobins ruined by the Restoration, who would, by my assistance, have the means of clubbing together to assail it.”

Does such folly cause Monseigneur any uneasiness?

“ It rather annoys me ; I am the butt of every attack. To-day, comes an old priest, a martyr to his faith ; he is succeeded by a constitutional priest, whose supplies are cut off by the new bishops. To-morrow, I shall receive the petition of an emigrant forgotten by his king ; the next day will appear a general on half pay, and dying with hunger. A colonel marries his daughter without a portion ; this will not do ; he wishes me to present her with costly bride's clothes. The dauber who has made a wretched painting of Napoleon insists that I ought to purchase his work which is not admitted to the public exhibition. His colleague will give me a certificate of royalist opinions if I will disgrace my saloon by hanging there, (after paying a heavy price for the purchase,) his portrait of Louis XVI welcomed by Henry IV to the Elysian fields. I can affirm having heard an



author, who, after dedicating to me the first edition of his works, proposed that I should subscribe to the second edition dedicated to M. de Fontanes, in the preface of which he adverts to the homage which bashful merit had been formerly compelled to pay to the usurping powers. All such taxes upon my purse are insupportable to me. I give, and assuredly not with a sparing hand ; but I desire to do so as I best think proper, with judgment, to those who are actually in want, to persons who are really in indigent circumstances."

I thought his complaints were well founded ; what bounds are there to the grasping dispositions of those perfect pickpockets who clip your purse by means of fine phrases and of impudent falsehoods ?

I can instance two cases of the kind which are wholly unparalleled.

I was writing in my study, when a lady was announced to me. I rise ; the lady walks in. My first glance at her reveals to me that she is a female of loose character or an actress. I should rather have said she was both. She has some remains of beauty, but she smells of vice at an immeasurable distance, notwithstanding her perfume of amber. She has had misfortunes, as if misfortunes were ever wanting to strolling actresses, and she applied to me to repair them. Thanks, alas ! to the last revolution, I was no richer than she was ; I frankly told her so, when she replied :



“ ‘ I am not come here to give you alms, but to receive alms from you ; I am in want of five francs ; if you refuse them, I open the window, and throw myself out into the street.’

“ And the violent creature seemed about to suit the action to the threat. I was seized with fright ; I never could have forgiven myself her death ; what a sight, moreover, for the neighbours was this contest with a woman at an open window ! I handed her the five francs thus extorted from me by violence, when she departed, saying :—

“ ‘ You have done well : for, had you refused me, I should, one way or another, have been the ruin of you.’

“ I was afterwards blamed for not having placed her in the hands of the police ; but I am of M. de Puymaurin’s opinion, (see a previous note of this chapter). An uproar of this kind always proves injurious, the more so, I repeat it, as the woman had yet some remains of beauty.

“ On another occasion, I was visited by a tall, thin, pale gentleman, with his hand across his breast ; he wore a fine hat and white linen ; he came to beg for two families, and called my attention to the contrast between them. The members of No. 1 are ruined royalists of the old nobility those of No. 2 are a father, a mother, and ten children, all workmen and republicans ; but christian charity is inexhaustible ; he is him-



self, besides, an ex-clerk in the finance department.

“ In that case, you had better go to my neighbour.”

“ ‘ I have just come from there, Sir ; what a heart of iron !’

“ He ! why he is a most serviceable man.”

“ ‘ Sir, he is a man of letters, an impious man, a democrat ; his abominable work, *History of the Inquisition of France*, conceals a venom which you would have noticed as I have done.’

“ By these words, I perceived that the petitioner, who had drawn his information from the Almanack of the twenty-five thousand addresses, had mistaken one story of the house for another ; he fancied himself in presence of a superior officer of the finance department, whereas he was in my own apartment. I enjoyed the mistake, and did not undeceive him.

“ You are, then, acquainted with M. de Langon ?”

“ ‘ I am so, to my sorrow ; he caused me to be removed in 1830 from the place which I held, and which he had turned over to himself. Oh ! Sir, you are thought very differently of in this place.’

“ But have you seen him ?”

“ ‘ Upwards of fifty times ; I have even told him . . .’

“ Assuredly not what he is going himself to tell you ; which is, that you are a miserable wretch,



an imposter, a cheat ; for I am the man of letters whose misfortune it is to be exposed to the rapacity of a scoundrel such as you, because my name happens to be inserted in almanacks ; you are not with M. M.—— but with M. de Langon whom you are so well acquainted with, who is an impious man, a democrat, and in high favor with the party of 1830.

“ I might have preached for an hour ; the scoundrel, caught in his own snare, knew not what countenance to assume ; at last, he took up his hat : I followed, apprehensive of some theft, until he reached the staircase door ; when he got outside, he cried out :

“ ‘ I will be revenged.’ ”

“ He did take his revenge, accordingly.”

Nothing can exceed the audacity of this sort of beggars ; they are among the plagues of Paris which the police do not pursue with all the means at their command. This signal abuse is kept up, as well as the shameful traffic of goods deposited at houses, and giving rise to quarrels and even lawsuits, by the aid of those almanacks in which are presented, to all who wish to turn them to profitable account, the names and residences of a multitude of citizens who are, in a manner, the property of the public. Thieves, tradesmen in embarrassed circumstances, agents of the political police, abandoned females, all vicious characters or imposters take advantage of them, make these



almanacks their daily study, and, assisted by such slender information, enter your house, the retirement of which cannot elude their search. I invariably inquire of all those who come to me under some vague pretence, by whom they are sent; and they are forced to acknowledge that such indiscreet dictionaries are their patrons and my intimate friends.

But I have dwelt long enough upon these sharpers of both sexes. Napoleon who, as a private individual, had suffered much from their false stories, held them in abhorrence; and they kept aloof during the whole course of his reign. Emboldened by the Restoration, they have become an intolerable nuisance. Napoleon delighted in treating his soldiers with kindness, in conversing with, and even in gently provoking them; they knew and took advantage of it with remarkable reserve and moderation. The French nation are distinguished by an exquisite sense of delicacy, and unparalleled judgment. No other nation, not excepting the Italians, is gifted with such superior tact.

I recollect, amongst other instances, that at a review at which I was present, an old *grogard*, as he called them, who strictly conformed, for the rest, to the species of ceremony observed amongst military men, and which was part of the camp etiquette,—an old *grogard* stepped out of the ranks, presented arms, held up his hand to his



shako, and stood as still and motionless as the statue of one of the guards of Pharoah. The Emperor, whose eye was glancing at this manœuvre, walked two or three steps forward, as it were at random ; then, suddenly wheeling round, and finding himself face to face with the *grognard*, thus opened the colloquy with his hollow voice :

“ What is it you want ? ”

“ Tell me, Sire : how much longer shall I have to run after the cross of honour ? ”

“ Oh ! you desire to have it ? ”

“ I deserve it. ”

“ You say so ? ”

“ My services prove it ; my comrades will attest so by . . . . ! ”

“ Don't swear. ”

“ Zounds ! Is it not mortifying to think that I should have followed you to Italy where we thrashed Wurmser at Mantua, and Melas at Marengo, afterwards when we beat the Austrians at Austerlitz, where the other Emperors, the pair of whom were no match for you, were so courteously treated ; —at Jena, where we gave it to the Prussians to their heart's content ; and yet, after all, to be no further advanced than a novice who still sobs after his mother's pap ? ”

“ I have, in fact, seen you every where. ”

“ Well then, Sire, contrive so that I may see a piece of red ribbon at my button hole. ”



“ Have you been wounded ? ” inquired Napoleon.

“ Nine times.”

“ This is worth a pension and a cross. You shall have both.”

The Emperor walked on ; the veteran followed him.

“ Sire, one word more. They have been so often promised me that I fear you will forget me like those wheedlers have done.”

“ Oh ! you mistrust me ? this shows no great respect for me ; but, since you will not rely on my word, here are pledges.”

“ The Emperor unfastened his cross, for he always wore a silver one, like a mere knight of the order, gave it to the soldier, and with it a handful of gold.

It was during that campaign of Austerlitz, which the soldier was recalling to mind, that Napoleon wrote with his own hand, to Josephine, two days after the famous battle, the following letter ; its insertion here will no doubt gratify the reader.

“ My dear Josephine,

“ My star still guides me on my way ; the battle I have just won, and which the soldiers insist upon calling the battle of the three Emperors, will perhaps shine, in aftertimes, with



greater brilliancy than that of Marengo, its eldest sister. I am all happiness ! Heaven grant that it may continue. Wonder how great is my good fortune ; I conquered, the day before yesterday, the anniversary of our coronation. All my officers have performed prodigies of valour in this campaign ; my soldiers are heroes. With them, one might proceed to the extremity of the world, and I have a great mind to undertake the journey. The Austrians have behaved like children ; there is, amongst their military men, no such honour as we in France understand by the word ; they feel no shame in their defeat. They are surrounded, yield up their swords and go to dine with a good appetite. The ignorance of those officers quite sickens one. With twenty grenadiers of my guard, I would undertake to beat, with the flat of our swords, four hundred officers of that nation, ranged in order of battle.

“ These people, so full of boasting on the very eve of the battle, are now perfectly abject before me ; how can so much pride and servility be found combined ! My brother, the Emperor Francis, came to visit me in my bivouac ; I was, and am still, in a wood and straw hut, which my aides-de-camp had ornamented with the standards taken from the enemy. When I learnt that His Majesty was approaching, I ordered those hangings to be removed, which I shall send off to the Invalides.

“ The Emperor Francis came in a carriage



drawn by six horses, with no other suite than the two Princes of Lichtenstein and General Prince Schwartzemberg. He appeared like a perplexed old dotard ; this was in rule. I received him as well as I could, did him the honors of my hut, and said to him : I receive you in the only palace I have inhabited for upwards of two months. He lisped out, with a smile, the following reply : ‘ You turn this habitation to such good account, that you must feel a liking for it.’ We spoke of business in a summary manner. Our plenipotentiaries will supply the rest ; he shall learn the cost of a short war against me. He has had the generosity to intercede with me in behalf of the King of Naples. That King, I answered, has ceased to reign. He is my brother-in-law. He is the slave of his wife. I then added with a graver tone : He came to treat with, and forthwith betrays me ; he welcomes the English and the Russians ; he shall disappear from the kingdom of Naples. My brother changed the conversation, and presented to me the three Princes who came in the Emperor’s suite. I received them well. They are men of distinguished merit. I have avoided paying a visit to the Empress, in order to spare her the pain of an embarrassing position with respect to her family.

“ Count Haugwitz arrived on the eve of the battle ; was very mysterious, spoke little, and almost in threatening language. I suspected that



English gold had worked in that quarter. I said to Caulaincourt, whom I commissioned to treat with him : Induce Haugwitz to start for Vienna ; he will await the results. In virtue of those results, my dear Josephine, Prussia remains my faithful ally. The Count returned, for the express purpose of congratulating me. His Sovereign is delighted at my success ; he was so lavish in my praise, that I could not help saying to Murat : This is a compliment, of which fortune has altered the address.

“ This letter is of immoderate length, such as I have not written for a long time. I renew to you the assurances of my unbounded love. Your son performs wonders ; embrace your daughter, the children, my brothers, my mother whom I should have named first, all my friends, in short. There will soon be another crown in the family. Adieu.

“ NAPOLEON.”

This man was colossal in every thing !

The above letter recalls others to my mind, one in particular, which is not without its merit. Savary wrote it to a lady with whom he lived upon terms of close intimacy. He very correctly described in it the confusion of Alexander after the battle of Austerlitz, which was so much at variance with his boasting previously to that celebrated action. Nevertheless, I prefer making my readers acquainted with another which was written



to me by a friend who was in the service of Josephine ; it will afford a pause to the reader's imagination.

“ Are you fond of gossip, my dear friend ? Say you are, for what else can I send you from Malmaison ? It is an absolute bear-garden, such idle talk, such prattle, such petty quarrels and nocturnal adventures. The latter may be reckoned by dozens. I select one, which will enable you to fill up the remainder.

“ Josephine is, as you know, the very best amongst the best of women ; she never was backward in promoting the happiness of any one who asked a service at her hands ; she has solicited so much, and so unreservedly from our ministers, that her credit with them has altogether ceased. The fact is so notorious that petitioners, a peculiar race whom Providence has created to annoy the remainder of the children of Adam, have insensibly withdrawn themselves from her ; they are a keen scented race, and have found out her disfavour. None but stupid, daring provincialists now apply to the Empress, just as they would to any of her footmen ; they at least come to us petition in hand, and speak of veneration, love and gratitude ; their grievances are scarcely listened to.

“ But what her Majesty the Empress is unable to effect in public affairs, she does in her



own audience ; and, though she has often had reason to complain of ingratitude, we nevertheless occasionally see a young and pretty creature, very foolish or very witty, which is the same thing, admitted as an inmate of her apartments, become the butt of mischief-loving ladies, and an object of attraction for a swarm of pages, equerries, young chamberlains, and of others of still lower degree. This lasts until the damsel disappears. She is lost in a cloud, or she runs away with some giddy fellow ; or, which is of more frequent occurrence, owing to well merited disgrace, she is sent back by the *diligence* to her own family or to her convent.

“ A perfect wonder made her appearance amongst us some months ago ; a nymph-like shape, a Venus in figure, the presence of a Diana, Absalom’s hair, (this letter was dated in the days of the Empire), gentleness, simplicity, innocence, no wit, little common sense, but a fascinating countenance, and beauty enough to spare to any one else who might stand in need of it ; add to this, a brilliant complexion, eyes that would drive one to despair by their provoking expression ; in short, a very apple of discord amongst us.

“ A week had not elapsed when the verses of La Fontaine

Deux coqs vivaient en paix : une poule survient,  
Et voilà la guerre allumée.



might with propriety have been applied to Malmaison. The first whisper was : Peter is the favorite of Mademoiselle de ——— No, Paul is the man—perhaps both at once? These rumours fly about ; conjectures follow. We were under the sway of angry and tyrannical feelings. This state of things would have long continued, had not the Empress calling to me one evening, said :—

“ ‘ M. de . . . . . I request you will tell me what is this black-leg of which so many stories are related.’

“ A black-leg ?” I unconsciously repeated, as it happens when any thing is mentioned which we are unprepared to hear.

“ ‘ Yes, Sir, that unlucky spectre which under the guise of a colossal leg, covered over with black crape, wanders about in the garden when all discreet persons at least have retired to rest.’

“ I respectfully answered that such as these had not been confided to me, for it was well known I would instantly put a stop to them.

“ ‘ Well, Sir, I request you will take measures, accordingly. I am fond of the days of chivalry as represented in romance, or at the theatre Feydeau ; but, after sun-set, and in this place, such scenes are highly blameable.’

“ It was now my turn to be angry ; I knew and was assured, that the apparitions of the enormous black-leg were no invention. This hideous spectre



had shewn himself, for the last fifteen days, or rather nights, to speak more correctly. The servants of the household, the very companies of the guard, were already a prey to the terrors of superstition. Husbands returned to the company of their wives at an earlier hour; female friends slept together; and, with the exception perhaps of Her Majesty, the ladies no longer disguised their fears.

“ I had for a servant a phlegmatic German, as strong as a Turk, as brave as Cæsar; he attends me at my summons. I give him my instructions: a bottle of wine, a pie, some bread, and ten francs, promising him double the sum if he consents to explore the park in the night time. He engages to do so. My mind being now at ease, I retire to rest. On awaking the next morning, I behold Momer before me; he was a perfect phantom; he is no longer the same lively, quiet man I had hitherto found him: he is harrassed, taciturn, and half intoxicated.”

“ What have you ascertained?”

“ ‘ I beseech you, Sir, give me my discharge.’ ”

“ Your discharge? what for? you are dreaming!”

“ ‘ I beg, Sir, you will pardon my ingratitude: but I have no longer the courage to expose myself willingly to a certain and sudden death. I wish to quit France and return to Germany.’ ”

“ I am amazed; what has occurred, what have you seen? answer me.”

“ ‘ If you desire it, I will tell you the truth.’ ”



“ What a simpleton you are ! was it to conceal from me what you might discover that I sent you last night to run about the fields and keep watch in the park ?”

“ ‘ In that case, I will tell you that I have seen the black-leg ; it spoke to me, and I must instantly quit your service under pain of an early death and eternal punishment.’ ”

“ I was waxing angry, but checked myself, rose up, and, unable to get from this silly fellow any thing more than incoherent words, I granted him his request ; he was to remain eight days longer in my service, and then take his departure.

“ In the course of the morning, two soldiers of the battalion of the old guard, which was stationed on duty at the Château, came up to speak with me. My German servant had told them of his mishap ; they turned him into ridicule, and proposed to replace him, provided I could obtain their officer’s permission to sleep out. I applauded their zeal, gave them some drink, settled the question of discipline with the commander, who consented to part for twenty-four hours with his two men, both excellent troopers, with huge mustachios, who with pointed bayonets have already caused so much terror to the living that I assuredly calculated on their giving some alarm to the dead. Now, we cannot fail to have accounts of this black-leg.

“ I watched the dawn of day with almost super-



stitious impatience ; I am informed, at the hour of seven, that one of the *grogards* desires to speak with me : he enters my room.

“ Where is your comrade ? ”

“ ‘ In the hospital, Sir.’

“ Has he been wounded ? ”

“ ‘ May Heaven forgive you, Sir ; it is unfair thus to bring christians into the presence of Satan.’

“ What ! have you seen it ? ”

“ ‘ No doubt, I have ; if I am on my legs, I am hardly the better for it. Nichole is nearly dead with fright : the poor fellow never can recover from it.’

“ But what is it, after all ? ”

“ ‘ The black-leg ; you know all about it. I need not say more. Oh ! the wretch, how hideous !’

“ Has it appeared to you ? ”

“ ‘ Indeed, it has, soul and body, head, feet and hands.’

“ A leg ! you talk nonsense.”

“ ‘ One might do so with far less cause for it. I am going in quest of Monsieur le Curé, to confess my sins to him. . . . Joking apart, it is a grand sight.’

“ I gave him his fee, and bit my lips. The alarm increases. On the approach of night, no one dares to stir a single step ; we only hear of marvellous stories. The phantom has been every



where ; he has been seen in the gallery leading to the apartment of Mademoiselle M. . . . . : the poor girl is beside herself with fright.

“ The lapse of a few days only added to the general terror. I was advised to apply to the police ; but was reluctant to adopt this course, knowing how much the Empress was averse to any intercourse with them. Nevertheless, Her Majesty still complained, and the mischievous imp persisted in his pranks. Stung to the quick, I wrote to the prefect and explained the matter to him. The magistrate replied that he would cause a more active watch to be kept round the Château, and sent me, at the same time, a young fellow not more than twenty years old, whom he extolled as an idle vagabond, a cunning lad, a shrewd prowling gipsy, fit for any thing, caring for nothing in the world, but capable of laying hold of Satan himself, though belonging to his gang, provided any one should be disposed to pay him handsomely for his trouble.

“ In consequence of M. Dubois' letter, I sent for and questioned this sagacious agent. He related to me numberless affairs from which he had cleverly extricated himself. The present must be the case of a robber, he fears none : or of a lover, well then, he will lay hands on him. I advise him to walk along the galleries, and I gave orders accordingly. It was agreed that, if the phantom inhabited the Château, he would follow him to his den, and whistle



by way of signal ; if, on the contrary, the leg effected its retreat through the park, he would, on quitting the house, hasten to the garden, when in order to give warning to the several sentries, he would fire a pistol. On hearing the report, the sentries thus put upon their guard, were to set themselves in motion, in order to cut off the retreat of the intruding visitor.

“ This plan being arranged, I went to inform Her Majesty of it ; she gave her approbation, was prepared for an alarm, and, thus admonished beforehand, would not be disturbed by it. She promised, besides, the strictest secrecy ; for the more I investigated the matter, the more was I led to think that the hollow leg might possibly be

\* \* \* \* \*

“ I was now satisfied that the mystery would be cleared up ; I evinced on the evening in question more cheerfulness than usual. I saw my cunning agent for the last time at eleven o'clock, and promised him a five hundred franc note if he succeeded in taking the delinquent. All retired to rest at midnight. I refrained from going to bed. I read, I wrote, but with distracted thoughts. A single idea predominated in my mind. I heard the report of a pistol in the garden, not far from the window of my apartment.....I started, a second report was soon afterwards heard, then a third, and eleven in succession ; it was a perfect



skirmish. Lost in conjectures, I descend the staircase, and hasten to the garden ; all the inhabitants of the château, suddenly awake from their slumbers ; the sentries, the officers, all clear their way. I proceed to the spot where I expect to find my valet..no trace whatever of Ernest ; but, at the appointed spot, a large pool of blood recently spilt, and no human trace, nothing to complete the proof that a murder had been committed. I employed the remainder of the night in inspecting the park and the château, and making a minute search in every corner. I order the unfortunate young man to be hailed ; I hail him myself : he has disappeared. From that moment, every trace of him was completely lost. The prefect of police himself could procure no account of him ; this is what he apprized me of ; but those eleven reports of pistol shots which the whole of Malmaison had heard as well as myself ; who could have fired them ?

“ Nothing could exceed my confusion. I acknowledged my defeat to Her Majesty, who said to me :—

“ All that is left for us to do is to give way to the phantom, and go to Paris ; it will not follow us thither. I doubt of its returning here, when Napoleon comes back.

“ Her Majesty, accordingly, took her departure with all the ladies. I remained, but from that moment I no longer had a crow to pluck with the black-leg, which discontinued its pranks. Three



months afterwards, Mademoiselle M. . . . married a general officer who made her a Countess ; at the same time, a carrier left on his way with the porter of Malmaison, a huge case, directed to me, carriage free. I was absent on business connected with my duty, but I returned three days afterwards. I imagined that some contractors of Paris had sent me various articles I had applied for ; I had the case opened in my presence. There was removed from beneath a quantity of linen and hay an immense pasteboard leg, covered over with black crape and a false nose twelve inches long, hanging to it.

END OF VOL. I.



LONDON :

SCHULZE AND CO. 13, POLAND STREET.















Buchbinder-Lehrwerkstätte  
Nikolausheim  
Dürrlangen bei Gänzhorn







Lamothe-Langon, Étienne-Léon <<de>>,

Evenings with Prince Cambacérés, second Consul, arch-chancellor of the  
empire, duke of Parma ...

Bd.: 1

London (1837)

Gall.rev. 478 k-1

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10422546-7